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STUDIES IN BEOWULF CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

THE MANUSCRIPT, EARLY EDITIONS, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CRITICISM

The Anglo-Saxon manuscript commonly known as Beowulf probably entered England in oral form with the immigrants, traders, and mercenaries who came to England in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries. In its earliest English form, it probably consisted of several completely independent lays, at least one of which dealt with a version of the story of the Bear's Son present in several forms in pre-literary Germanic culture. During the Seventh Century, the oral stories accumulated a number of descriptive traits reflecting the distinctive social conditions of the changing Germanic culture of the Anglo-Saxon people while preserving the fictional and semi-historical elements which had become parts of the lays prior to the migrations. At this juncture, the influence of Mediterranean culture, characterized in the Christian missions at the end of the Sixth Century, made its most important contribution; England entered the age of literary history and

thus, for the first time, possessed the written records of the culture's activities and allowed for early development as a self-reflective society.

One manifestation of this self-reflection was the effort made to provide a written record of some of the traditional oral stories, influenced by those Christianized persons in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries responsible for the writing of the first copies of the manuscript which has survived finally only as Cotton Vitellius A.XV. Critical opinion still disagrees on the time, the place, and the nature of this early written recording of the traditional stories with their anglicized, Christianized influences. While most critical opinion now supports the belief that the written records could not have occurred before the latter third of the Seventh Century, there is open disagreement about the latest possible date for it. Until the third decade of this century, modern criticism had generally placed the early collection of the oral stories into one sustained unit at sometime around the end of the Seventh or the beginning of the Eighth Century. Recently, however, critical opposition to this position has developed, and dates as late as the end of the Tenth Century have been advocated. Similarly, while it is still the general critical opinion that the version of the manuscript which still exists is a Tenth Century West Saxon one, the origin of the manuscript has been variously attributed to Northumbria and Mercia. Also, while it was generally assumed in the first

of the Twentieth Century that the original manuscript was the work of one man, recent criticism returns to the theory of multiple authorship so strongly defended by the majority of the German critics of the Nineteenth Century. Consequently, the three most battered questions about the manuscript all devolve from the same point of origin: at what stage in the cultural development of a national consciousness did the Beowulf first move from the oral tradition to the written tradition? From this general question developed the complex controversies over date of origin, place of origin, and nature of the early compositions. The complex nature of these questions is obfuscated by the extremely incomplete information available for comparative analysis. Most opinions, therefore, are necessarily largely conjectural, a position which apparently pleases almost all contemporary critics who continue to analyze these questions in frequent and vain attempts to arrive at a composite critical analysis which would render further examination of these questions irrelevant.

The matter is no easier by the changing social condition of culture in the late Ninth and Tenth Centuries. The conquering Nordic invaders, restrained from ideological identification with Germanic culture because of the divergent and totalitarian influences of Christianity with its concomitant classical parallels, and recognizing the increasing need for some sense of national unity to replace the several kingdoms, the persons

responsible for the later manuscript forms of Beowulf influenced the manuscripts through linguistic changes-- some intentional, some unintentional-- and through textual additions, thus increasingly obscuring the early origins of Beowulf. Separation from its earliest history became even greater after the manuscript found its way into some monastic library in the Tenth Century, for the Norman Conquest of the mid-Eleventh Century resulted in a deliberate ignorance of Anglo-Saxon writings on the part of those secular and clerical elements of the society which would normally sustain interest in antiquarian items. It was not until the agrarian, social, and religious transformations of the Sixteenth Century that information concerning the manuscripts of pre-Conquest days again became available.

The Sixteenth Century Tudor Renaissance stimulated revival in the antiquarian manuscripts of England in two ways. First, of course, it increased interest in antiquarian relics for their own sake: the revival of Latin as a secular language, importation of classical and traditional artifacts and ideas, and interest in the great classical writers were typical of this renaissance. Second, and of greater importance for indigenous manuscripts, was the increased interest in nationalist identification which clearly manifested itself in the establishment of a national church and the dissolution of the monasteries. The renewed interest in antiquity readily found a patriotic outlet in increased interest in native art objects at the same time that

dissolution of monastic libraries released quantities of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to public acquisition. Notable among scholars interested in native antiquities was the Dean of Litchfield, Lawrence Nowell, whose name appears on the first page of the single extant manuscript, Cotton Vitellius A. XV. Nowell, who died in 1576, may not have actually written his name on the manuscript, although it would appear probable that he did so; the presence of his name does suggest that the manuscript had probably been circulating among English antiquarians from the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1534 until the end of the century. Sometime during this period, the Beowulf manuscript came into the possession of the seventeenth-century antiquarian, Sir Robert Cotton, for it was catalogued in his collection of manuscripts as Cotton Vitellius A. XV, the identifying description of the manuscript when it first reappeared in the world of scholarship, and the title by which it is still known.

For one hundred years after the death of Cotton, the manuscript remained virtually unnoticed in the Cottonian collection. It, along with the bulk of the collection, was stored at Little Dean's Yard, Westminster, where the manuscript cataloguer, Humphrey Wanley, noticed it and included it in his Antiquæ literaturæ septentrionalis liber alter, seu Humphredi Wanleii librorum vett. septentrionalium, qui in Angliæ bibliothecis extant,..... catalogus historico-criticus (= Book ii, or Vol. iii, of George Hickes's

Thesaurus), Oxoniæ, 1705.[1] His description of it as a story of the wars between the Swedes and the Danes was an error, but a fortunate one, for the error later led to the rediscovery of the manuscript. It was still at Little Dean's Yard, Westminster, when it was partially destroyed by fire in 1731, a century after Cotton's death. Subsequently, the manuscript was moved into quarters in the British Museum where it remained unmolested by fire and critics for the next two decades. At that time, in the middle of the 1780's, G.J. Thorkelin, a Danish antiquarian employed by the Danish Civil Service, came to England to make copies of the manuscript because, based upon Wanley's inaccurate appraisal of the manuscript, he thought that it might be of interest to Danish students. He made one transcription himself, and ordered another transcription written by an amanuensis ignorant of the language. Thorkelin's transcriptions subsequently became the basis for the first edition of Beowulf, done by Thorkelin in 1815.

Thorkelin was not the only scholar showing interest in the manuscript, however. Increased interest in antiquarianism in England, evident in the Ossian controversies, the neo-Chaucerian poetry, and other antiquarian controversies of the 1780's and 1790's, stimulated early efforts at translation of the manuscript, such as Sharon Turner's early translation of one-hundred and sixty-five lines of the poem. The Thorkelin edition, however, was the first major impetus for critical analysis, for as early as 1816,

Outzen commented upon the possibility that the manuscript story may have come over with Frisian traders in the Sixth Century, a comment which was ignored but which was reiterated as late as 1968. (This early criticism and its later defense certainly shed dubious light upon the progress of Beowulf criticism.) Subsequent to the Thorkelin edition, other editions and translations started to appear. They included Grundtvig's translation into German of 1820, Conybeare's edition of 1826, and Kemble's edition of 1835.

At this time, the literary criticism of the manuscript genuinely started. As Outzen's statements suggest, the two characteristics of this early criticism were that it dealt with the manuscript in large part as a critical phenomenon for linguistic, not literary appraisal, and that the vast bulk of the criticism was German. Characteristic of the German criticism was the analysis of the manuscript in terms of nature allegory.

Perhaps the greatest of the nature allegory critics was Karl Müllenhoff, who commented on the myth basis of the poem as early as 1844. His analysis of the nature allegory was developed further in 1869 and defined in his posthumous work of 1889. He believed that the earliest systematic and authoritative explanation of the poem in critical terms was the nature allegory. His theory, that the elements of the poem represented the death-resurrection "seasons myth," had been earlier proposed by Kemble.[2]

Other critics, notably German critics, did not question the general soundness of this theory; they did, however, offer substitute interpretations. Laistner spoke of Grendle as a symbol of pestilence; Boer believed him to be "the terror of the long winter nights"; Meyer spoke of the allegory of storms and a lightning god; Brandl described Grendle as "a corn grinding, the work of slaves, the sign of the conquered foe"; Sarrazin described Beowulf as a sun-god who "swims faster than all other beings; the dashing sea-wave cannot compete with him; he overtakes it very quickly." The theories were varied but none disputed the general theory of Müllenhoff that the manuscript could best be interpreted in terms of nature allegory. Even Sievers, as late as 1895, postulated a general belief in the validity of the nature allegory basis of interpretation which was the modish critical method of approaching the story of the manuscript in the Nineteenth Century. Not until the turn of the century, actually not until the work of Panzer in 1910 was that general method of analysis genuinely challenged as a method of criticism.

Other schools of criticism centered about the manuscript also developed as the Nineteenth Century moved into its final decade. The greatest single stimulus for these were, undoubtedly, the numerous editions and translations of the poem that were becoming available. Thorpe's edition came out in 1855, Grundtvig's in 1861, James A. Harrison and Robert Sharp's production for a specifically

American audience in 1883, James A. Garnett's in 1882, and the significant edition of the manuscript facsimile by the Early English Text Society with Zupitza as general editor in 1882. Criticism, still essentially German and still essentially concerned with the poem as a linguistic, historical, and archeological phenomenon, continued apace in the work of Kolbing in 1876, of Wulcker in 1881, and the previously mentioned text of Müllenhoff in 1889. One of the most significant developments of the 1880's was the development of the theory that the manuscript was a collation of several lays composed originally by several authors. This theory of multiple authorship, notably exemplified in the work of ten Brink in 1888 and Müllenhoff in 1889 was to become one of the major sources for critical commentary after the turn of the century.

Still another development in the canon of criticism surrounding the poem evolved from the linguistic studies so prevalent during the last three decades of the century. It dealt with the metrical pattern, not only of Beowulf, but of all Anglo-Saxon poetry. In 1885, Eduard Sievers, certainly the most brilliant German critic of Anglo-Saxon studies in the last century, discussed the nature of Anglo-Saxon poetic metrics. He clarified his ideas in 1893 in Altergermanische Metriks.[3] His system, which posited five basic types of rhythms, became the standard for metrical studies of all Anglo-Saxon poetry, including Beowulf. Sievers' system proved so influential that, although studies on the metrical system

of Beowulf would constitute a major portion of the criticism of the subsequent half century, all studies on the subject tried to incorporate his ideas and his schemata rather than reject them outright. Nevertheless, other methods of metrical analysis were propounded. For instance Kaluza, in 1894, proposed a system which failed to achieve much notice primarily because it called for a classification into ninety types. Interesting though it might be, its unwieldiness brought about its critical demise before the end of the first decade of the subsequent century.[4]

As the century closed, two noteworthy phenomena occurred. The first was the increasing frequency with which the critical studies on the manuscript were becoming the work of English speaking critics. Random examples of these critics' works illustrate the second phenomenon: the replacement of an interest in the linguistic aspect of the poem with an interest in the literary aspect of Beowulf. Miller, writing about the position of Grendle's arm at Heorot in 1889; G.W. Small's criticism in 1893; Earle's edition of the Deeds of Beowulf in 1892 because of the need for a new English edition; F.A. Blackburn's influential article on the "Christian Coloring in Beowulf"--all demonstrate that, at the end of the Nineteenth Century the criticism was not only becoming increasingly the work of English language scholars but that the linguistic studies of the nineteenth-century German scholars were being replaced by different approaches, frequently literary ones, on a greater variety of subjects concerned

with the poem. The poem had finally moved into the domain of English scholarship. In the next decade, it would begin to move from the domain of historical and social analysis into the domain of literary scholarship.

While Beowulf criticism had a substantial beginning by the 1880's, the body of criticism around the turn of the century increased greatly in quantity and quality. Some of the new directions this criticism took were evident before 1900. One such direction is suggested in F.A. Blackburn's article on "The Christian Coloring in Beowulf," which appeared in 1897.[5] Following the tendencies of previous scholarship to rely on textual analysis as opposed to rather general critical appraisal, Blackburn analyzed four classes of passages in the poem: these included, one, "passages containing Bible history of allusions to some scriptural narrative"; two, "passages containing expressions in disapproval of heathen ideas of heathen worship"; three, "passages containing references to doctrines distinctly Christian"; and four, "incidental allusions to the Christian God, to his attributes, and to his part in shaping the lives and fortunes of men."[6] From his examination of these passages, Blackburn reaches the following conclusions: first, "of the passages in Beowulf that show a Christian coloring, two are interpolated"; second, "all the other passages in which any Christian tone can be detected have been made to suggest Christian ideas by slight changes such as a copyist could easily make"; and third, "the Beowulf

once existed as a whole without the Christian allusions."[7] This article and its conclusions illustrate the changes taking place in criticism of the poem in several ways. Consider, for example, the problem of the poem's name. During the nineties the untitled poem still struggled along without a definite name. As late as 1914, Beowulf was referred to only as "the oldest English epic," Significantly, Blackburn refers to the poem as "the Beowulf." The poem was, in other words, beginning to be recognized as the story of a man named Beowulf and was being called after that man's name. Only after the First World War would the critical recognition of the poem as a story of Beowulf become so assured that the definite article could finally be dropped. (Fortunately, in this matter as in all matters of critical concern, a later critic willingly challenges even this rather evident truth.)

Another more significant change characterized by Blackburn's article is the growing tendency to deal with some aspects of the poem as a poem, that is, to treat it as a matter for literary appraisal and not solely as a source book for linguistic, social, and archeological analysis as it had so frequently been considered in the Nineteenth Century. A third new direction suggested by the article is that it is written in English, by an English scholar, for a primarily English audience. After the generations of scholarship which were almost exclusively German in the Nineteenth Century ended, the poem genuinely started to become a subject

for English literary appraisal.

A fourth consideration deals with the subject of the article itself. Regardless of other approaches, the matter of the Christian influences in the poem was of concern to several scholars at the time. Each subsequently had his say and, even today, the religious tone of Beowulf remains one of its most fertile sources of criticism. This interest is certainly evident in the lecture delivered in Philadelphia in October, 1900 by Oliver Emerson; these ideas appeared in expanded form in an article entitled "Legends of Cain, Especially in Old and Middle English," in 1906.[8] He carefully traces references to Grimm's Deutsch Mythologie, which in 1835 first called attention to the Hebrew legend of Cain and his posterity as explaining Grendel's descent from Cain in Beowulf; to Bouterwek's Caedmon's des Angelsachen Biblische Dichtungen, which in 1854 associated the passages with the Cain legend and the allusions to Beowulf. He refers to Bouterwek's references in Das Beowulfslied, Germania I in 1856 to the Book of Enoch and Rabbinical lore as explaining Grendel's relationship to Cain. Here, Bouterwek mentions the tradition that Cain is the son of a devil, Samael; the man-devouring element in the Grendel story he thinks is from Hebrew folklore.

After mentioning Bugge's brief treatment of the Grendel-Cain relationship in Studien über der Entstehung der nordischen Götter und Heldensagen, Emerson attacks Potatscher who tries to remove any Christian significance

from the passage by emending "for Metode" to "formetode." He then comments on the state of English scholarship before moving to his analysis of the poem. He remarks that "English editors of Beowulf have added nothing to the subject. Thorpe barely mentions the Grendel-Cain relationship as 'no doubt of Rabbinical origin,' a note which may easily have come from Bouterwek. Earle, whose annotations are the most copious that have appeared, passes over it entirely."[9] This general summary by Emerson is of interest, for it demonstrates the nature of Germanic criticism which was chiefly interested in mythological or tentative folklore sources and what one competent critic called the ineffective Beowulf scholarship of the English. Emerson did analyze the Grendel-Cain relationship with the purpose of establishing the essential role of Christianity in the poem--in direct opposition to the position of Blackburn. Emerson argued that "the connection of the giants with Cain was common medieval tradition."[10] He continues, "A Christian writer, or redactor of the Beowulf story, such as could make allusions to Grendel's relation to Cain, would surely understand the passages relating to the giants and the flood as merely a part of Christian tradition. If he added them to an original heathen story, as is usually believed at least, he did so wholly from . . . Christian sources. . . ."[11]

Emerson is certain that the sources were not chiefly northern: "It can not be that the poet who had so clearly in mind the medieval Cain story could have connected the

magic sword with a heathen myth and placed upon it an inscription of biblical origin."[12] In the section on "Cain's Descent," Emerson argues while "it has usually been assumed that the relation of Grendel to Cain is an interpolation and that, by removing a few lines, we can restore the original Teutonic and unchristian character of the Grendel story . . . . There can be no reasonable doubt that the Beowulf poet described Grendel and his mother in terms similar to those chosen when devils and demons must be meant."[13] Emerson concludes his arguments about the Grendel-Cain relationships, by which means he plans to demonstrate that there are essential elements in the poem which are Christian and not just Christian coloring by commenting that "It seems to me impossible that the poet of Beowulf could have been so thoroughly Christian as he shows himself in many places, and make so frequent references to purely heathen conceptions."[14]

The Christian elements argument continued to demonstrate its vitality as a source for critical argument during the years before the First World War in the two articles by Friedrich Klaeber which first appeared in two parts in 1911 and 1912, and these critical judgements were later incorporated into his encyclopaedic edition, which appeared after the war. "Die Christlichen Elemente Im Beowulf" is an attempt to establish through textual analysis the indisputable fact that the poem is basically a Christian poem because it incorporates elements from Christianity which must

have appeared in the original version of the poem.[15] Although the article quieted much of the dispute, it by no means laid the problem. Much real analysis of the Christian element in Beowulf was to follow Klaeber's pronouncement.

Another question of major literary concern which was explored in manners differing from the criticism of the previous fifty years dealt with the genre of the poem. Throughout most of the Nineteenth Century, the prevalent theory of the poem as a conglomerate of Germanic lays distracted from any possible analysis of the poem as some kind of literary entity. This position was disputed and, as the century ended, the unity of the poem became a defensible position and, also, a fertile source for literary analysis.

While analyzing the nature of epic and romance, W.P. Ker in 1897 discussed the nature of Teutonic epic as it compared with other epic forms. Ker, whose criticism of Beowulf was often attacked, was most vulnerable to those who disagreed with his position that "the pedigree of Grendel is not authentic" or that "the Christian sentiments and morals are not in keeping with the heroic or the mythical substance of the poem" or that the poem "is defective from the first in respect of plot," Ker also found the poem highly commendatory. He said, "Beowulf is, at any rate, the specimen by which the Teutonic epic poetry must be judged. It is the largest monument extant. There is nothing beyond it, in that kind, in respect of size and completeness. If the old Teutonic epic is judged to have failed, it must be

because Beowulf is a failure."[16] This statement is clearly meant to imply that neither the Teutonic epic nor Beowulf is a failure, for Ker closes his comments on Beowulf with a positive remark:

> The epic keeps its hold upon what went before, and on what is to come. Its construction is solid, not flat. It is exposed to the attractions of all kinds of subordinate and partial literature,--the fairy story, the conventional romance, the pathetic legend,--and it escapes them all by taking them all up as moments, as episodes and points of view governed by the conception, or the comprehension, of some of the possibilities of human character in a certain form of society. It does not impose any one view on the reader; it gives what it is the proper task of the higher kind of fiction to give--the play of life in different moods and under different aspects.[17]

While subsequent critics took exception with virtually every statement made by Ker, from his view of the Christian elements to his identification of it as an epic, none could believe that he was not lavish in his praise of the poem.

Perhaps his single greatest contribution to the poem was to strengthen the argument among English scholars that the poem was an entity. Another English scholar of the period who supported the position that Beowulf was a poem which manifested a strong sense of unity was John Clark Hall. In the preface to his translation of 1901, Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment, Hall, like Ker, speaks of the difficulty of discussing the poem because of its complexity and because of the lack of much other Anglo-Saxon material for scholarly analysis. Hall says, "No book [more than Beowulf] has given rise to more of theorizing and scarcely any book furnishes less fact on which to base legitimate theorizing."[18]

This difficulty does not stop Hall from making five conjectures about the poem ; he supports these with orderly, if sketchy, substantiations. He conjectures that: first, the poem was written by one man; second, he was a heathen converted to Christianity; third, he was an Anglian, most probably a Mercian; fourth, he was a poem maker--not a translator; and fifth, the poem was written about the year 700. These positions seem rather elementary, but they constitute some of the most critically used, and abused, questions in Beowulf criticism: the problem of the unity of the poem; the problem of the Christian elements in the poem; the nature of the man who first placed the poem in written form; the date of its origin; and the place of its origin. These, along with the problem of the generic nature of the poem, with which Ker was concerned, constitute virtually all of the basic problems with which the critics of the poem are still concerned today. Perhaps Lawrence and Chambers were correct in rejecting the apparent literary solecism suggested in both Ker and Hall. Perhaps critical progress is possible, in spite of scanty sources; however, the infinite analyses of the problems, which were identified at the turn of the century or before, indicates that such critical progress is both slow and often hidden in a massive bonepile of blatant and banal criticism.

The difficulty of analysis was recognized by Sedgefield in his edition of Beowulf published in 1910: "The time has

arrived when one scholar or even many scholars cannot hope to add much of value to the great mass of Beowulf literature in the field of history, legend, or archaeology . . . It has seemed better to concentrate upon the text of the poem and its more exact interpretation, a field where some advance is more feasible."[19] This comment from the 1935 preface to his edition makes his 1910 edition, with its short discussions of each of the critical Beowulf problems of the day, reveal that a change in criticism was taking place during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

In 1912, another Englishman, H. Munro Chadwick, used the heroic epic genre as the basis for an argument concerning Beowulf. A chapter entitled "The Origin and History of the Heroic Poems," appears in his book, The Heroic Age.[20] Using Beowulf as the basis for later heroic writings, Chadwick is really more interested in heroic poetry in general than in this particular poem. The result is an argument which is based upon rather general statements. Trying to relate the development of certain poems to the "Heroic Age," he argues that Beowulf must have come from continental sources before the end of the Sixth Century; it must have assumed its present form in the Seventh Century; it must have been written by a poet belonging to the Christian period from a poem in full epic form before the middle of the Seventh Century; it must have-- in its present form--contained material of a Christian nature substituted for objectionable heathen material--although

the religious passages are not due to interpolation--because much of the material, i.e. Æschere's burial, excludes the possibility of Christian authorship in the original form. Indications for the bases upon which these rather dogmatically contrived generalizations rest are indicated by some of his statements in passing about the poem.

For instance, in establishing the position that the poem belongs to England's Christian era and contains instances of genuine Christian expression not placed upon the poem at a later time, he simply states " . . . [the poet] belonged to the Christian period, consequently . . . the religious passages are not due to interpolation." He bluntly states that "older poems from before the end of the sixth century were the source for Beowulf." He returns to his generalizations in reference to the Christianity of the poem when he says that "it seems to me probable that such expressions [Christian alongside pagan practices] are frequently in the nature of substitutions for objectionable matter, rather than gratuitous additions . . . " Furthermore, he states, "In such a case [the sadness of the Danes who were unable to burn Æschere's body] the possibility of Christian authorship seems to me to be definitely excluded." He continues to use the cremation ceremony descriptions as a basis for dating the poem when he argues ". . . if we are justified in believing that the descriptions of cremation ceremonies contained in Beowulf date from a time when the practice was still remembered, we must conclude that they were composed not later than the

third or fourth decade of the seventh century." Thus, he believes that " . . . the bulk of the poem must have been in existence--not merely as a collection of lays or stories, but in full epic form--an appreciable time before the middle of the seventh century." Having argued that the poet was not a Christian but that the Christian passages were not interpolated and that the corpus of the poem came from the Sixth Century but must be attributed in its present form to a Seventh Century manuscript, he summarizes: "On the whole, we may conclude with probability that they [some heroic poems including Beowulf] assumed substantially their present form in the course of the seventh century. But if our reasoning with regard to the composition of Beowulf is correct [in respect to descriptions such as that of Æschere's cremation], we shall have to refer the first treatment of the subject to the sixth century."[21] This argument which seems a bit ambivalent about the author's religion, about the time at which the poem was first compiled, and which still makes certain positive statements about the poem may seem simply a product of romantic criticism. Unfortunately, such certainty about uncertain subjects--even those very ones with which Chadwick dealt--was to remain as a standard practice in the persuasive criticism which was to more and more engulf the poem as the years after the First World War passed.

However, the criticism of the poem was passing into the hands of English scholars. That some seemed still a bit naïve about their critical positions may be intuited from

the introduction of The Oldest English Epic, a translation by Francis Gummere which appeared in 1914. In the introduction to his translation, Gummere comments generally on the poet's conception of characters. He says that the Beowulf poet knew and loved "the lays about all these adventures. . . . He knew also the lore of devil's and hell's fiends, who vex the righteous man, and nevertheless can be met and conquered by a Christian champion." Gummere also comments generally on the English setting of the poem, the groupings of characters, and the traditional "metre and style of the epic."[22] He also strongly defends the ability of men to translate the poem into modern English poetry. This was one facet of English criticism of the poem as it emerged in the early years of the Twentieth Century. Basically, the criticism was somewhat romantic, general with limited attempts at substantiation, and even a little sceptical that such substantiation was possible.

As the years before the First World War approached, there was a more positive expression in criticism by some English critics. For instance, William Witherle Lawrence's "The Haunted Mere in Beowulf," published in 1912 displayed this positive approach. He commences by offering several interpretations of the nature of the mere. Contradictions in the description itself are pointed out. He then argues that "different conceptions were here amalgamated despite their unlikeness, in the usual course of epic evolution. . . . The mountains and waterfall scenery is the fundamental conception with which the others appear to have been later

confused" for purposes of effect such as the idea of a Christian evil on the moors or the niceras of a sea fight in order to show the courage of the hero.[23] This analysis is summarized in the final portion of the article where a comparison with the Grettissaga shows that the mere described must be a waterfall before a cave and that the two stories must have come from a common Scandinavian source, a variety of the Bear's son archetype, as Vigfusson had earlier argued. Criticism which attempted analysis of specific problems, such as this, was a welcome addition to the growing body of English criticism.

Later, in 1915, Lawrence's article on "Beowulf and the Tragedy of Finnsburg" was published. The first part introduces the Finn episode, the plight of Queen Hildeburg is compared to that of other Germanic women who had had to choose between husband and kin in a society of vengeance and revenge. In the second part the background of the Frisian treachery is introduced, with discussions of who the groups might have been historically, and this part ends with an analysis of the Germanic warrior code of loyalty to his Lord. Contradictions between the episodes and the fragmentary Finn lay are pointed out in the third part. There Moller's strophentheorie interpretation of the relationship of the two is dismissed as universally discredited. This is one of the few uncomplimentary positions taken by English critics toward their German peers of the previous generation. Normally, the praise is virtually universal. In the fourth

and final part, Lawrence discusses the natures of the characters in the episode--who they are and how they are related. In summation, he remarks that it is a good tale for a scop to tell in a Danish hall where a feast for a Geat, superior to any of the Danes present, is going on. It "appeased wounded pride" as a "tale of Danish heroism and Danish vengeance."[24] This article suggests a much more scholarly approach to the problems of criticism offered in the poem than much of the more general English criticism which treated Beowulf as part of a tradition rather than as an integral entity with ample opportunity for specific criticism itself.

In both these articles, Lawrence exhibited the evidence of competent scholarship produced by him and his peers in the years following the war. His was certainly not an isolated effort, however. Albert Cook's Concordance to Beowulf, which came out in 1910, was a strong indication of the capacities of English scholarship before the war. However, the distinction between a concordance and a work of literary criticism should be noted: the former is a work of scholarship, but literary criticism should, as a critic of our time has commented, combine some of the best thinking of the scholar with the imaginative thinking of the poet. Most concordances are not poetic. Perhaps, in the years before the war, Lawrence best exemplified the combination critic-poet.

Nevertheless, much of the best critical work on the poem was still being done by German scholars. Ernest Kock's series

of articles in 1904 on "Interpretations and Emendations of Old English MS" included a section on Beowulf. Kock dealt thoroughly, if tediously, with the linguistic problems offered by some of the lines in the manuscript.[25] The major difficulty existing is that of the arrogance of the German critics. In order to state their opinions, too frequently they adopted a strong persuasive position. For example, Kock's work consists of a number of passages which are closely examined to arrive at a correct interpretation. Several theories of other editors are offered for analysis at each passage before Kock pronounces his "definitive" statement. Perhaps, his interpretations, and emendations, would be easier to accept if his scholarly arrogance did not manifest itself so evidently in his opinions of his peers' recommended readings.

The criticism of the great scholar Klaeber in his articles on "Die Christlichen Elemente Im Beowulf" has already been discussed. These articles were only two of several in both languages which made his encyclopaedic work, his postwar edition of Beowulf, no surprise to scholars.

Another work of German scholarship appearing in the years before the war and playing an important role in the development of subsequent criticism of the poem was Friedrich Panzer's monumental study of the relationships between Beowulf and Germanic folklore, Studien Zur Germanischen Sagengeschichte, published in 1910. In the second section which treats Beowulf, Panzer presents a number of compilations.

Beowulf itself is summarized first. Then follows an abstract of Müllenhoff's 1889 nature-allegory myth theory, which so strongly influenced literary interpretations of the poem throughout the latter half of the Nineteenth Century and which was only really disspelled by Panzer's study and by Lawrence's criticism in the twenties. Panzer then offers a summary of ten Brink's theory and Symons', both of which, especially the latter, were modifications of Müllenhoff's. After dealing in a similar manner with Mogk, Simrock, and Sarrazin, Panzer comments on the myth theory of interpretation of Beowulf: "Und schliesslich bedeutet auch für Boer . . . der mit der Auffassung seiner Vorgänger scharf ins Gericht geht, die Sage doch auch eine Art mythischer Allegorie, die er nur wieder anders deutet."[26] He later says, "Sage und Märchen haben nich bloss einige Motive gemein, vielmehr ist die Sage von Beowulfs Kampf mit Grendel nach meiner Auffassung nichts anderes als das durch die Kunst des Skop zur Heldensage gewandelte Märchen vom Bärensohn. Ich schicke mich an, diese Behauptung zu beweisen."[27] He then discusses the probable historicity of the characters and summarizes: "Ich denke, solche Erfahrungen lehren doch, das es nicht von vornherein unerlaubt ist, Erzählungen, obschon sie verschiedenen Grundtypen angehören, auf Berührung in Einzelheiten hier zu vergleichen. . . . des Beowulf mit einer jüngeren dänischen Sage geflossen ist."[28] After this, Panzer analyzes the similarities in Beowulf, Grettir Asmundarson,

Grimr Helguson, Ormi Storolfsson, Bjarki, and Beanriogain na Scana Breaca. The result, ultimately, of this rather influential critical work was that the nature-allegory myth theories of the Nineteenth Century lost favor in scholarly circles to the growing recognition that Beowulf really belonged to the area of folklore if literary analysis were to progress.

Thus, the period prior to the military political conflict between the English and German nations which definitely effected Beowulf criticism, as such a catastrophe must, prepared the ground for an age of genuinely brilliant scholarship in English, during the twenties and thirties. Certainly contributions from other languages, many like Hoops' work in the thirties are of unquestionable excellence. However, the outbreak of military hostilities marked a decided decline in the quality of non-English Beowulf scholarship. For instance, in 1916, scholarship was characterized by an Italian named Pizzo working on an English poem and publishing in German.[29] From 1920 onward the bulk of competent editorial work, much of the linguistic analyses, and almost all of the scholarly literary criticism were done either in England or in America. Beowulf had, like its hero, left its Teutonic home to seek its fame in the academic mead halls of a people speaking a different language, in this case, English.

CHAPTER I

NOTES

[1] Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, ed. Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1950), p. [cxxv].

[2] Beowulf: Untersuchungen über das angelsüchsische Epos und die älteste Geschichte der germanischen Seevölker (Berlin, 1889).

[3] (Halle, 1893).

[4] Max Kaluza, Der Alterglische Vers (Berlin, 1894).

[5] PMLA, XII (1897), 205-225.

[6] Blackburn, p. 208.

[7] Blackburn, p. 224.

[8] PMLA, XXI (1906), 831-929.

[9] Emerson, p. 878.

[10] Emerson, p. 904.

[11] Emerson, p. 905.

[12] Emerson, p. 915.

[13] Emerson, p. 879.

[14] Emerson, p. 916.

[15] Fr. Klaeber, "Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf," Anglia, XXXI (1911), 111-36, 249-70, 453-82; XXXVI (1912), 169-99.

[16] Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature. (London and New York, 1897), p. 183.

[17] Ker, p. 202.

[18] 2nd ed. (London, 1901), p. xxxvii.

[19] Beowulf, ed. W.J. Sedgefield (Manchester, 1910), p.vii.

[20] (London, 1912).

[21] Chadwick, pp. 50-56.

[22] (New York, 1914), p. 16.

[23] PMLA, XXVII (1912), 230.

[24] PMLA, XXX (1915), 429.

[25] Anglia, XXVII (1904), 218-237.

[26] (München, 1910-1912), p. 252.

[27] Panzer, p. 254.

[28] Panzer, p. 312.

[29] Enrico Pizzo, "Zur Frage der ästhetischen Einheit des Beowulf," Anglia, XXXIX (1915), 1-15.

CHAPTER II

THE YEARS BETWEEN THE WARS

The years following the first world war were significant for Beowulf criticism primarily because of the publication of two volumes which were immediately established as scholarly landmarks in editing and interpretation. So competent were they that they still must be reckoned with in any adequate analysis of Beowulf criticism. In a sense, they represent the beginning of modern Beowulf criticism for they are manifestly the best comprehensive analyses extant of the criticism which preceded them; they thus pointed the way for future Beowulf studies. The first of these was R.W. Chambers' 1921 book on literary interpretation of the poem, Beowulf: An Introduction.[1] In the following year, Friedrich Klaeber's encyclopedic and judiciously thorough edition of Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg was published.[2] These texts became the major reference sources for a substantial number of the articles and books on Beowulf, which were written during the subsequent thirty years.

As Chambers begins his study, he introduces the reader to what he considers to be the basic problem of Beowulf studies by contrasting the historical and fantastical elements.

In discussing their relationships, he comments that "fantastic as these stories are, they are depicted against a background of what appears to be fact. Incidentally, and in a number of digressions, we receive much information about the Geatas, Swedes and Danes: all which information has an appearance of historic accuracy, and in some cases can be proved, from external evidence, to be historically accurate."[3] Chambers approaches this problem by concentrating first upon the historical elements in the poem. The first lengthy section deals with the kings of the Geats and their wars. On the possible historicity of King Beowulf, Chambers concludes that "it has been generally held that the Beowulf of our poem is compounded out of two elements: that an historic Beowulf, king of the Geatas, has been combined with a mythological figure Beowa, a god of the ancient Angles: that the historical achievements against Frisians and Swedes belong to the king, the mythological adventures with giants and dragons to the god. But there is no conclusive evidence for either of these presumed component parts of our hero . . . it is enough to note that the current assumption that there was a king Beowulf of the Geatas lacks confirmation from Scandinavian sources."[4]

Chambers continues his discussions of the historical elements of the poem with a section on the probable identity of Leire on the north coast of Seeland as the site of the hall, Heorot; he then discusses the blood feud between the

Danes and the Heathobeardans; finally, the tragedy which surrounded Hrothulf is analyzed. The historical part of the study ends with a section on the Offa kings of Mercia and the possible historicity of Offa's queen Thryth. Chambers suggests that "the most obvious and facile way of accounting for the likeness between what we are told in Beowulf of the queen of Offa I, and what we are elsewhere told of the queen of Offa II, is to suppose that Thryth in Beowulf is a mere fiction evolved from the historic Cynethryth, wife of Offa II, and by poetic license represented as the wife of his ancestor, Offa I."[5] Chambers offers this explanation as the idea of Earle.[6] Chambers then proceeds to comment pejoratively upon it: "Unfortunately this, like many another facile theory, is open to fatal objections. In the first place the poem of Beowulf can, with fair certainty, be attributed to a date earlier than that at which the historic Offa and his spouse lived. Of course, it may be said that the Offa episode in Beowulf is an interpolation of a later date. But this needs proof."[7]

In Chapter Two, Chambers starts a discussion of the non-historical elements in Beowulf. He begins with an analysis of the possible sources for the legends (and for Beowulf) in the Beow-myth; the source is then analyzed as myth. Chambers evaluates these mythological interpretations: "The different mythological explanations of the Beowulf-Beowa and Grendel have depended mainly upon hazardous etymological explanations

of the hero's name. The most popular is Müllenhoff's interpretation."[8] Chambers summarizes Müllenhoff's theory, comments on alternative mythological interpretations which have been offered--by other nineteenth-century German critics--and concludes: "Such explanations were till recently universally current: the instances given above might be increased considerably. . . . Sufficient allowance was not made for the influence upon heroic poetry of the simple popular folk-tale, a tale of wonder with no mythological or allegorical meaning."[9] With this simple transition, Chambers moves from the no longer modish mythological interpretations to the mode which was becoming the accepted theory, folk-tale analysis. Of this trend, he cautions: "Now, of late years, there has been a tendency not only to recognize but even to exaggerate this influence: to regard the hero of the folk-tale as the original and essential element in heroic poetry. Though this is assuredly to go too far, it is but reasonable to recognize the fairy tale element in the O. E. epic."[10]

Following the work of, most notably Panzer, Chambers goes on in Section II to analyze the parallels between Beowulf and the Scandinavian sagas of Grettir and Ormr. Showing special interest in the similarities with Grettissaga, Chambers comments that "the evidence seems to me to support strongly the view of the majority of scholars--that the Grettir episode is not derived from Beowulf in the form in which that poem has come down to us, but that both come from

one common source."[11] Moving from the probably toward the realm of certainty, he later contends: "it is certain that these stories--like all the subject matter of the Old English epic did not originate in England, but were brought across the North Sea from the old home. And that old home was, in the closest connection, so far as the passage to and fro of the story went, with Scandinavian lands. Nothing could be intrinsically more probable than that a story, current in ancient Angel and carried thence to England, should also have been current in Scandinavia, and thence have been carried to Iceland."[12] Chambers continues: "The probability is, then, considerable, that the Beowulf-story and the Grettir-story are independently derived from one common original."[13]

In Section III of the second chapter, Chambers considers Bothvar Bjarki. He sees this as a method of analyzing Beowulf where there appear "two distinct elements which never seem quite harmonized: first, the historic background of the Danish and Geatic courts, with their chieftains, Hrothgar and Hrothulf, or Hrethel and Hygelac: and second, the old wives' fables of struggles with ogres and dragons."[14] This reiterates Chambers' original problem: the difficulty of analyzing a combination of historical and fantastical elements. Why this combination should bother a scholar familiar with the literature of medieval England, Iceland, Norway, and Germany is difficult to comprehend, but Chambers centers his entire text around with "problem." His only conclusion in

the section on Bothvar is that the evidence supports a conclusion that the two elements in the stories derived from folk tale.

Having dealt with parallels from written folk tale sources, Chambers moves in Section IV to a study of sources in non-written folk tales. He begins by listing the six characteristics of the Bear's Son, a tale which

> has been instanced as showing a resemblance to the Beowulf-story. In this tale the hero, a young man of extraordinary strength, (1), sets out on his adventures, association with himself various companions; (2), makes resistance in a house against a supernatural being, which his fellows have in vain striven to withstand, and succeeds in mishandling or mutilating him; (3), by the blood-stained track of his creature, or guided by him in some other manner, the hero finds his way to a spring, or hole in the earth; (4), he is lowered down by a cord and (5), he overcomes in the underworld different supernatural foes, amongst whom is often included his former foe, or very rarely the motheroof that foe: victory can often only be gained by the use of a magic sword which the hero finds below; (6), the hero is left treacherously in the lurch by his companions, whose duty it was to have drawn him up . . . .[15]

Chambers then proceeds to apply these criteria to several folk tales, including Beowulf. His conclusion from this comparative study is "that to speak of Beowulf as a version of the fairy tale is undoubtedly going too far. All we can say is that some early story-teller took, from folk-tale, those elements which suited his purpose, and that a tale, containing many leading features found in the 'Bear's Son' story, but omitting many of the leading motives of that story, came to be told of Beowulf and of Grettir."[16]

In Section V, Chambers considers the relationship between Scef and Scyld. Scrutinizing the historical and non-historical elements with great detail, he concludes about Scef, or Scefa, that "when the Catalogue of Kings in Widsith was drawn up, before Beowulf was composed, at any rate in its present form, he was regarded as an ancient king. When the West Saxon pedigree was drawn up, certainly not much more than a century and a half after the composition of Beowulf, and perhaps much less, Sceaf was regarded as the primitive figure in the pedigree before whom no one lived save the Hebrew patriarchs."[17] About Scyld, Chambers says: "Scyld, on the other hand, is in the first place probably a mere eponym of the power of the Scylding kings of Denmark."[18] Chambers concludes by compromising: "all becomes straightforward if we allow that Scyld and Sceaf were both ancient figures standing at the head of famous dynasties. Their names alliterate. What more likely than that their stories should have influenced each other, and that one king should have come to be regarded as the parent or ancestor of the other?"[19]

In Section VI, Chambers returns to the Beow-myth and allows that Beow is a possible source for Beowulf but remarks that "Whilst, therefore, we admit that it is highly probable that Beow (grain) the descendent of Sceaf (sheaf) was originally a corn divinity or corn fetish, we cannot follow Müllenhoff in his bold attribution to this 'culture hero' of Beowulf's adventures with the dragon or with Grendel."[20]

In Section VII, the parallels between Heremond-Lotherus and Beowulf-Frotho are disputed by an analysis of the characteristics of the latter two in eight ways in which they are similar. In each instance, Chambers argues that the likeness is a commonplace characteristic that could be expected of a hero and that the parallels therefore do not prove that the one character is the other.

In the beginning of Chapter Three, Chambers explains that he intends to deal with the origin, date, and structure of the poem. In the first area, he argues that "evidence to prove Beowulf a translation from a Scandinavian original is . . . wanting. On the other hand, over and above the difficulty that the Beowulf belongs just to the period when intimate communication between the Angles and Scandinavians was suspended, there is much evidence against the translation theory."[21] Chambers continues: "The obvious conclusion is that these Scandinavian traditions were brought over by the English settlers in the sixth century."[22] Using the traditions, he contends that the poem was composed in England:

> It is noteworthy that, whereas there is full knowledge shown in our poem of those events which took place in Scandinavian lands during the whole period from about 450 to 530--the period during which hordes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, were landing in Britain--there is no reference, not even by way of casual allusion, to any continental events which we can date with certainty as subsequent to the arrival of the latest settlers from the continent. Surely this is strong evidence that these tales were brought over by some of the last of the invaders, not carried to England by some casual traveller a century of two later.[23]

When Chambers turns to dialects in Section II, he questions the validity of Lichtenheld's test for dialect. He argues: "Anyone dating Maldon solely by 'Lichtenheld's Test' would assuredly place it much earlier than 991. It is easy to make a false use of grammatical statistics: and this test should only be applied with greatest caution."[24] Of 'Morsbach's Test' he says: "that it establishes something of an argument that Beowulf was composed after the date when final 'u' after a long syllable, or 'h' between consonant and vowel, was lost, and that this date was probably within a generation or so of the year 700 A.D. But there are too many uncertain contingencies involved to make the test at all a conclusive one."[25] Chambers prefers to support the position, although he admits that he is not absolutely certain, "that the poem was in all probability originally written in some non-West-Saxon dialect, and most probably in an Anglian dialect, since this is confirmed by the way in which the Anglian hero Offa is dragged into the story."[26]

In Section III, Chambers deals with the structure of the poem. He summarizes some of the obvious problems of structure: first, the poem is not a biography of Beowulf, it is two distinct episodes; second, both stories are broken by digressions; some concern Beowulf, others appear "not strictly apposite"; third, the narrative moves irregularly; fourth, the traces of Christian thought and knowledge which meet us from time to time seem to belong to a different

world from that of the Germanic life in which the poem has its roots. Müllenhoff's and ten Brink's theories of disparate lays as the source for the poem, an argument that Beowulf is really only a compilation of lays, is next convincingly and arduously attacked:

> the theories of the "dissecting school" are not in themselves faulty, if we admit the assumptions on which they rest. They fail however in two ways. An examination of the short lay and the long epic, so far as these are represented in extant documents, does not bear out well the assumptions of the theorizers. Secondly, the minute scrutiny to which the poem has been subjected in matters of syntax, metre, dialect and tradition has failed to show any difference between the parts attributed to the different authors, such as we must certainly have expected to find, had the theories of the "dissecting school" have been correct.[27]

Chambers refuses to make the assumptions necessary to the acceptance of the above theory: "What Müllenhoff and ten Brink . . . assume is that these original lays were simple in outline and treated a single well-defined episode in a straightforward manner; that later redactors and scribes corrupted this primitive simplicity; but that the modern critic, by demanding it, and using its presence or absence as a criterion, can still disentangle from the complex composite poem the simpler elements out of which it was built up. Here are rather large assumptions."[28] Although Chambers then gives great credibility to Schücking's composite theory, which appeared in Beowulfs Rückkehr in 1905, he summarizes his position against the theories of compilation: "To me, the fact that so careful and elaborate a study of the story of Beowulf's Return fails to betray any satisfactory evidence

of separate authorship, is a confirmation of the verdict of 'not proven' against the 'dividers'. But there can be no doubt that Schücking's method, his attempt to prove differences in treatment, grammar, and style, is the right one. If any satisfactory results are to be attained, it must be in this way."[29]

In Section IV, Chambers treats the question of the Christian elements and arrives at much the same conclusion which Klaeber had made in his article published in Anglia before the war. Chambers position is summarized: "Until . ... discrepancies between the different parts of Beowulf can be demonstrated, we are justified in regarding the poem as homogenous: as a production of the Germanic world enlightened by the new faith. Whether through external violence or internal decay, this world was fated to rapid change, and perished with its promise unfulfilled."[30]

Part Two of Chamber's introduction consists of a group of documents which illustrate the stories in Beowulf and the Offa Saga. In it, Chambers includes selections from Saxo Grammaticus, Hrolfssaga Kraka, Grettissaga, Thattr Orms Storolfssonar, Bjarka Rimur, The Mercian Genealogy in MS Cotton Vespasian B. VI. fol. 109b and MS C.C.C.C. from the Ninth Century chronicle rolls, and the Chronicle of the Kings of Leire as illustrations to establish his earlier contentions, especially those in reference to the basic place of Beowulf in the development of story from earlier folk

lore sources. Most of these texts were provided in order to provide ready access for the reader to materials not readily available in 1921.

In Part Three, Chambers discusses the problems surrounding the Finnsburg episode in Beowulf and the fragmentary lay of the Fight at Finnsburg. He comments upon the difference in tone in the two: the episode in Beowulf is told in a tone of pity, of "the legacy of mourning and vengeance which is left to the survivors"[31] while the tone of the fragment "is inspired by the lust and joy of battle.[32] Having established this basic distinction, Chambers discusses and dismisses Moler's theory which "rests upon his interpretation of the Eotens as the men of Hnaef."[33] Attacking this position as "not the natural one," Chambers then attacks Bugge's theory, "the current theory before his time, [which] has been generally accepted since."[34] The theory again rests upon the interpretation of the word "eotenas." Chambers cites evidence to establish the word as meaning "Jutes." This, however, "renders very difficult the assumption of Bugge and his followers that the word 'Eoten' is synonymous with 'Frisian'." [35] Chambers then comments upon Ayres' opinions, Lawrence's reading, and Kemble's suggestions as well as the nature of Germanic blood feud ethics before offering his own attempt at reconstruction. In it, he demonstrates the temporal relationship between the fragment and the episode as well as the psychological motivations

impelling the characters to act.

In Part IV, an Appendix, Chambers offers additional commentary on mythological theory; Kemble is admired here but found wanting. Chambers concludes: "until some further evidence be discovered, we must regard the belief that the Grendel and dragon stories were originally myths of Beow, as a theory for which sufficient evidence is not forthcoming."[36] Chambers studies the cult of Pekko, the corn god, and the Sceaf-cult as possible sources for Beow; he then moves to a discussion of the Grendel place names in Old English documents; comments upon the stages in West-Saxon genealogy above Woden; discusses and rejects Schücking's ideas on the dating of Beowulf with the opinion "that from the point of viewof its close touch with heathendom, its tolerance for heathen customs, its Christian magnanimity and gentleness, its conscious art, and its learned tone, all historic and artistic analogy would lead us to place Beowulf in the great age--the age of Bede."[37] He then comments upon the classical influences on the poem; reopens the Jute question and concludes it by arguing that Geatas is phonologically, historically, and geographically certainly a term which applies to the Gotar and not to the Jutes.

Chambers then includes a long summary of archaeological evidence,element by element, explaining the significance of each to the poem. The Leire question is briefly mentioned as are the terms "bee wulf" and "Bear's Son" as sources for

the name Beowulf. Next, Panzer's theory of folk-lore influence is presented; variants are discussed. Chambers states: "I think enough has been said to show that there is a real likeness between a large number of recorded folk-tales and the Beowulf-Grettir story. The parallel is not merely with an artificial, theoretical composite put together by Panzer. But it becomes equally clear that Beowulf cannot be spoken of as a version of these folk-tales. At most it is a version of a portion of them."[38] On the matter of the folk-tale influence, Chambers summarizes: "Panzer has, I think, proved that the struggle of Beowulf in the hall, and his plunging down into the deep, is simply an epic glorification of a folk-tale motive."[39] This chapter then concludes with a discussion of the date of Hygelac's death and the conclusion Chambers reaches is that "all the evidence points to Hygelac's raid having been after 516 and probably after 520, although perhaps before 522 and certainly before 531."[40]

Here ends Chambers incredible, encyclopedic, monumental work on Beowulf. It was to reappear again in 1930 with an additional chapter; Wrenn was to bring it out again in 1958 with still another chapter. However, because of the scholarly thoroughness manifested in the 1921 edition, it was to appear virtually unchanged in each of the subsequent editions. In publishing his work, which was a summary of the critical questions and positions on them, Chambers produced a monument in Beowulf criticism, for his work clearly estab-

blished English critical superiority in the field and focused attention on the directions future criticism would take.

The other encyclopedic milestone in Beowulf criticism, published soon after the war, was Friedrich Klaeber's edition of Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg in 1922. Its publication in the United States indicates the interest in the poem in America as well as in England. Designed not as an interpretation, as was Chambers' book, but as an edition for student and scholarly use, Klaeber's volume isprimarily concerned with the textual presentation rather than with its interpretation. In the voluminous notes, however, Klaeber presents the most probable meaning of difficult passages according to his reading and a compilation of the best criticism available to him at the time. This is the justification for calling the edition "encyclopedic" for Klaeber drew from a selected bibliography of linguistic, aesthetic, and historical criticism which is itself fifty-nine pages long. The mere sight of this formidable bibliography is more than sufficient to frighten anyone who pretends to seek a catholic knowledge of the incredible mass of critical study surrounding the besieged but heroic epic, Beowulf. (It needs only to be mentioned in passing that the bibliography would be considerably longer if it included all the criticism and not just selected criticism, or if it were inclusive of material written on the poem since Klaeber's edition appeared.)

In his one hundred and twenty-four page introduction to the poem, Klaeber first summarizes the story, breaking it into two parts: lines 1-2199 which he calls "Beowulf the Young Hero," and lines 2200-3182 which he refers to as "Beowulf's Death." This division emphasizes the dual episodic interpretation which Klaeber recognizes, but it also leads to a position of defense of the poem as a unified whole. Under the first part Klaeber very methodically identifies three sections: first, the fight with Grendel; second, the fight with Grendel's mother; and third, Beowulf's homecoming and report to Hygelac.

The second part is treated as a single unit. Within each division Klaeber divides the sections into parts. While this general approach is reminiscent of the Liedertheorie of the previous century, a theory now no longer in favor, Klaeber does not seemingly suggest the theory; his division of the poem seems simply to be reminiscent of it. In part two of the introduction, Klaeber discusses the fabulous or supernatural elements. In it, he agrees with Panzer's theory about the importance of the Bear's Son tale to Beowulf. He also discusses the parallel with Grettir and with Bothvar. Here, as elsewhere in the literary and aesthetic criticism of the poem, Klaeber does not attempt to match the analysis in depth of Chambers' book, for Klaeber's task is to introduce and edit, not to compile and comment on previous criticism. Klaeber does write about dragon fighting, an area Chambers

did not cover; his comment is indicative of his position, like Ker's, that the dragon fight is insignificant: "Dragon fights are events of such ordinary occurrence in medieval literature that it may almost seem otiose to hunt for specific sources of the Beowulfian specimen."[41] This position is of some importance, for it suggests the accepted idea of the lack of importance of the dragon in Beowulf, a statement about which Tolkien was to comment some fifteen years later.

Klaeber then comments briefly upon the two Beowulfs, the mythological one and the 'historical' one. The latter is dismissed: "outside of the introductory genealogy this shadowy divinity has no place in the Anglo-Saxon epic."[42] The former is analyzed briefly under the previous discussion of sources for the fabulous elements.

In Part III, Klaeber discusses the historical elements in the poem. Like Chambers, he discusses the Danish kings and their conflicts; the historicity of King Beowulf (which is actually just a summary of Beowulf's life as depicted in the poem); and the nationality of the Geats. About the latter, he comments, "On the whole, the Danification of the legends seems to be naturally accounted for by the very early absorption of the Geats into the Swedish state. The loss of their independent existence caused the deeds of the Geatish kings to be attributed to members of other, prominent Scandinavian divisions. The probability is thus certainly on the Gotar (as opposed to the Jutes) and it requires no

great stretch of the imagination to look upon this contest between the two Northern tribes as one of the most significant phases of early Scandinavian history."[43]

In Part IV, Klaeber treats the Christian coloring in the poem. This is, of course, one of the more convincing sections, for he relies heavily upon his articles on this subject which had appeared previously in Anglia. He argues that, although there is a pagan Germanic story told in the poem, "still, the general impression we obtain from the reading of the poem is certainly the opposite of pagan barbarism. We almost seem to move in normal Christian surroundings . . . the transformation of old heathen elements in accordance with Christian thought may be readily observed . . . Predominantly Christian are the general tone of the poem and its ethical view-point. We are no longer in a genuine pagan atmosphere. The sentiment has been softened and purified. The virtues of moderation, unselfishness, consideration for others are practiced and appreciated."[44] He continues his argument for the acceptance of the Christian elements as essential to the poem. The Christian elements are almost without exception so deeply engrained in the very fabric of the poem, he says, that they cannot be explained away as the work of a reviser or later interpolator. In addition, he finds it instructive to note that while the episodes are all but free from these modern influences, the main story has been thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christianity. It is

true, he says, the action itself is not modified or visibly influenced by Christianization. But the quality of the plot is changed. Klaeber then goes on to argue that Beowulf is a Christ figure, for he says "It would indeed be hard to understand why the poet contented himself with a plot of mere fabulous adventures so much inferior to the splendid heroic setting, unless the narrative derived a superior dignity from suggesting the most exalted hero-life known to Christians."[45]

In part V, which deals with the structure of the poem, Klaeber comments that the three struggles seem to be graded from least significant to most significant: "The fight against Grendel is rather monotonous and seems altogether too short and easy to give much opportunity for excitement. . . . The second contest is vastly more interesting by reason of its elaborate, romantic scenery, the variety and definiteness of incidents, the dramatic quality of the battle; the dragon is entirely too much for his assailant. We tremble for the venerable king."[46] This summation is of interest, for it suggests a kind of single unity in the poem which differs from the dual episodic nature Klaeber's earlier breakdown of the poem required. In many ways, this statement is suggestive of the kind of analysis of the unity of the poem which would appear in Tolkien's famous article on the poem.

Continuing with the episodes, Klaeber says: "On the whole, we have every reason to be thankful for these episodes, which not only add fulness and variety to the central plot,

but disclose a wealth of authentic heroic song and legend, a magnificent historic background. Still we may well regret that those subjects of intensely absorbing interest play only a minor part in our epic, having to serve as a foil to a story which in itself is of decidedly inferior weight."[47] In spite of his unquestioned mastery of the critical material surrounding the poem, especially in matters of textual analysis, these opinions concerning the digressions were opposed with more than a little success by Tolkien and Bonjour in criticism which would follow in the next quarter century.

Klaeber wisely moves then to discuss the types of speeches which appear in the 1300 lines devoted to speeches in the poem. Here he deplores the lack of steady advance: "The reader of the poem very soon perceives that the progress of the narrative is frequently impeded. Looseness is, in fact, one of its marked peculiarities. Digression and episodes, general reflections in the form of speeches, an abundance of moralizing passages, interrupt the story. The author does not hesitate to wander from the subject."[48] Once more, Klaeber expressed himself on a matter of aesthetic quality with which subsequent opinion, especially that of Arthur Brodeur, would successfully disagree.

In dealing with tone, style, and meter in Part IV, Klaeber comments that the author takes "the keenest interest in the inner significance of the happenings, the underlying motives, the manifestation of character. He loses no opportunity

of disclosing what is going on in the minds of his actors."[49] This statement seems strange in line with Klaeber's earlier statement that the poem does not advance steadily. Perhaps it indicates that Klaeber is a product of that school of German criticism which was concerned with emendation, textual, linguistic analysis and was really uninterested in the literary aesthetics of the poem. Certainly Klaeber was aware that the author was a conscious artist, for he comments: "Although the moralizing turn and also some of the maxims may be regarded as a common Germanic inheritance, the extent to which this feature as well as the fondness for introspection has been carried is distinctly Beowulfian and shows the didactic and emotional nature of the author himself."[50] Somewhat contradictory, Klaeber does reflect the growing interest in the question of the artistic integrity of the poet and of the artistic unity of the poem which would hold sway over the ensuing half century of Beowulf criticism. Klaeber summarizes his statements on style:

> our final judgment of the style of Beowulf cannot be doubtful. Though lacking in lucidity, proportion, and finish of form as required by modern tastes or by Homeric and Vergilian standards, the poem exhibits admirable technical skill in the adaptation of the available means to the desired ends. It contains passages which in their way are nearly perfect, and strong noble lines which thrill the reader and linger in the memory. The patient, loving student of the original no longer feels called upon to apologize for Beowulf as a piece of literature.[51]

In Part VII, Klaeber examines the language of the poem and the history of the manuscript, and in Part VIII, he discusses

the genesis of the poem, commenting on the unity of authorship:

> There is little trustworthy evidence to support positive claims of this sort [the compilation theories of Müllenhoff, Schücking, and others] . . . It is true, the probability that much of his material had come to the author in metrical form is to be conceded. But quite apart from the question of the forms of language or dialect we can never hope to get at the basic lays by mere excision, however ingeniously done. The Beowulfian epic style is incompatible with that of the short heroic lay, not to speak of the more primitive ballads which must be presumed to have existed in large numbers in early Anglo-Saxon times.[52]

Klaeber then moves to short commentaries on the date, historical allusions, linguistic tests, and relationships to other Old English poems, but these are treated rather summarily as if he either had little interest in them or that they were not problems of adequate significance to merit lengthy analysis. He does spend time on the rise of the poem and the authorship, about which he makes six points: first, the themes of the main story are of direct Scandinavian provenience; second, the episodic matter introduced into the first part is drawn from the ancient heroic lore brought over by the Anglo-Saxons from their continental homes; third, there is no evidence to show that 'a Beowulf legend' had gradually grown up out of popular stories that had been brought over to England by the migrating Angles; fourth, the notion that there was in existence even an approximately complete Scandinavian original ready to be put into Anglo-Saxon verse cannot be entertained; fifth, the author's

part in the production of the poem was vastly more than that of an adapter or editor; and sixth, the poem was composed in the Anglian parts of England is one of the few facts bearing on its genesis which can be regarded as fairly established. Whether it originated in Northumbria or Mercia is left to speculation.

From this point, Klaeber moves on to the marvelous, awe-inspiring bibliography, text, and notes upon which the excellent reputation of this book primarily rests. His work, as is Chambers', is primarily a compilation of the past, a purification of old errors in order that clearer insight into Beowulf would be more readily available. As with Chambers' work, the literary opinions stated in this monumental text suggested new directions, sometimes differing from Chambers', and, on matters of literary criticism, from many critics in the English-speaking world in the next half century.

Other criticism was done in these days of giants. Ernest Kock continued his study of interpretations and emendations of Old English manuscripts with an article in Anglia in 1922, which, like the earlier one, discussed Beowulf (as well as other texts) by means of minute scrutiny.[53] In his article, Koch employs more comparison of Beowulf to other texts of the Old English canon than in the earlier article treating the poem. Here, as in the earlier article, he defeats his arguments by assuming an attitude of absolute

correctness from which he can pontificate, showing the errors in the interpretations and emendations of texts offered by lesser beings before presenting his own solution to the problem with an air of absolute correctness. His work is of note, useful for the type of textual analysis he is undertaking. However, his unbearable Germanic attitude is offensive to the reader; scholarship is thus hindered by a bad example of criticism which appears in Beowulf scholarship with frequency (although not quite so overbearing), a kind of character assassination which seems to levy a personal attack on any scholar with whom one disagrees in matters of scholarship. Perhaps, Kock's attitude is simply a proof of a latent humanity even among critics where there are both brisk men and little men interested in Beowulf.

Another kind of man has been called a member of each class by critics; some have even placed him in the category of a shape changer or even of a berserker. Kemp Malone is a name which certainly strikes a response in the heart of every Beowulf scholar. An incredibly prolific writer of articles on the poem, Malone has been praised by some, such as Lawrence, for his daring interpretations in such works as The Literary Ancestors of Hamlet, which includes a discussion of historical sources treating historical elements in Beowulf. Other critics of renown, including Arthur Brodeur, have viewed some of Malone's rather bold theories as the work of a simple child who, as a member of the family, must be

somehow tolerated but not necessarily always admired for his cognitive powers. One of the earlier articles of Malone's, an article which typifies one of his techniques of publication, appeared in 1927. Its title, "Hrethric," suggests what it is about.[54] (Malone's titles often do, fortunately. Since several of them also are the names of characters in Beowulf, they indicate his current hobby horse: he picks a character, writes a lengthy article about the historicity of the character, and then moves on to another article.) In the article in question here, Malone, in fifty pages, explores possible parallels from Norse sagas for explanations of the relationships between Hrethric and Hrothulf and those who surround them in Beowulf. Although he makes many suggestions, no real conclusions seem to be reached except the one that a closer study of Norse analogues by Beowulf scholars would produce greater and more enthusiastic appreciation for the poem. The fact that any student of Panzer and Chambers--to name just two--might have arrived at the same conclusion only suggests that possibly lack of awareness of Beowulf scholarship was one problem with the article. A more plausible theory is, however, that Malone knew the criticism connecting the poem with Norse parallels; he was simply popularizing the idea for the substantial number of Beowulf scholars who apparently did not, and perhaps do not, bother to find out what anyone else is saying about the one thing they all purportedly have in common, the poem Beowulf. Malone's

article is difficult to follow; its major weakness is that it contains a substantial number of hypotheses which somehow in the course of the article seem to turn into certainties; it also covers an enormous amount of material, enough for several articles. But unfortunately, it covers most of it rather superficially. This is certainly a severe judgment against one of the most influential scholars in the field of Beowulf criticism in the past thirty years. However, because of the enormity of the quantity of criticism on Beowulf, one should perhaps be wary of a scholar's opinion simply because he is constantly publishing. Some of the greatest critics in the area, for instance, Brodeur and Tolkien, have rarely published on Beowulf; their concern in publication seemed to be with quality.

Aside from prolixity for its own sake, another source of questionable criticism which has deluged the field is suggested in the notes of S.J. Crawford in 1928 and 1929. Both entitled "Grendel's Descent from Cain,"[55] the first argues, very briefly, that the Book of Enoch, Job, Genesis, and Apocalypse suggest that Cain's descendants became sea monsters after the flood. The second article states that this theory was prevalent in Ireland. These articles do deal with the poem; they suggest something about the origin of Grendel from Cain, which is part of the poem; they, therefore, do deal with the influence of Christian sources on the poet. The articles do not indicate that the poet did use sources in contexts for which they were not meant. Most importantly,

they really only suggest. Malone's fifty page work would be more influential if it were more limited in scope, and shorter. Crawford's little exercises would be more influential if they were long enough to allow some kind of study in depth which would indicate that the problem discussed was worthy of study. Prolixis and poverty, two of the scourges of the critic, were really just beginning to run rampant in Beowulf criticism.

Sedgefield's comment on the enormity of Beowulf scholarship, which appeared in his 1923 edition[56] only notes a problem which was rapidly worsening. There were rays of light however. Klaeber's work was released again, in a second edition, substantially the same, in 1928.[57]

Also in 1928, another monumental study appeared, which strongly influenced subsequent scholarship, W.W. Lawrence's Beowulf and Epic Tradition,[58] which implied that the whole field of previous study was a bibliographical gremlin. The preface comments that "the main importance of a great poem must lie in its poetry."[59] This sounds like the introduction to a promising piece of literary criticism. However, Lawrence almost immediately adds:

> I am not one of those who think that appreciation of poetry comes alone through sensuous absorption in the impressions which it creates. I believe, on the contrary, that enjoyment of it is heightened as well as rectified by acquaintance with its literary antecedents and with the conditions that produced it. This is peculiarly the case with poetry so remote from modern life as Anglo-Saxon. But it is not easy to gain such special knowledge.[60]

This desire to enjoy the poem, a desire which can only be fulfilled through comprehension of the milieu in which the poem was written, is reflected in his aim for this lengthy book: "To review the subject-matter of the poem, both the main plot and the chief subsidiary material, and to show how this appears to have been gradually combined into an epic, giving due attention to the social and political background."[61] This certainly is a catholic, if somewhat circuitous route by which to approach the poetic aspects of a great poem.

In his introductory chapter, Lawrence states that the poet must have been some kind of secular court poet, using as his analogy the poems of Chaucer, "the work of a man familiar with courts, and writing for a courtly audience."[62] Considering the vast differences in the cultures of the two poets, such an analogy is a bit difficult to comprehend. Lawrence then speaks of the social milieu of the poet and comments upon the effect of Christianity upon it: "The religion of the characters seems imposed upon them rather than natural to them. The poorest and weakest parts of the poem are to be found among the definitely Christian passages. The only thing that is naive about the poem is its theology. here is untried material, and a childlike attitude toward a new faith. Tradition had not yet taught the poet how to treat it with technical assurance."[63] Such is the plight of the poet trying, it would appear clumsily, to treat the social conditions which he, as a poet familiar with the

court, should know. But the poet's art lies not with his depiction of a Christian culture, for in the poem "though ever present, the Christianity is all on the surface. The real vitality of the epic lies in its paganism."[64]

In the light of previous scholarship by Klaeber and Chambers, this view, which reverts to Blackburn's comments in 1897 without repeating his substantiation through examination of pertinent passages, is the seeming work of a popularizer, not the work one might expect from a scholar of the reputation of Lawrence. However, Lawrence does comment on the advantages served by the Christian elements: "Beowulf's piety, and the favor shown him by the Lord, are constantly stressed as in the typical saint's legend. Although the Christian veneer seems the least admirable part of the poem, from the literary point of view, it may, by a curious irony, have saved the whole from destruction, in days when many a bonfire of old manuscripts was lit for the faith."[65] Whether he is referring to the Anglo-Saxon era or the Sixteenth Century suppression of the monasteries is not made clear.

Having treated briefly of the history of the manuscript, Lawrence speaks of "a sharp separation of these two main currents of interest, the supernatural and the realistic, which naturally suggests itself."[66] This strongly resembles the division of the poem into historical and non-historical elements, which both Chambers and Klaeber suggested. The change in terminology might be explained by a desire for

difference rather than for a different kind of distinction. About the realistic part, Lawrence says that it is "remarkable for its fidelity to fact."[67] He finds this notable, for early poetry was, he asserts, "not concerned to separate fact from fiction."[68] This astounding verity is the more amazing when it is realized that "when history is retold as epic, the human element becomes all important."[69] Here is the real mastery of the poet:"Events of great ultimate historical significance are forgotten, and details by their peculiar appeal to the imagination become the springs of action."[70] At this point, Lawrence demonstrates his creative imaginative powers for which he was renowned as a scholar. This is indeed the spring board for action in the poem. Why then must he, and so many who follow him, insist upon a trek once more over the ground of political and social history suggested by Beowulf, to give "due attention to the social and political background?"[71]

In spite of his claims of enjoying the poetry of a poem, Lawrence moves in Chapter Two onto that well-trod ground of the peoples and social organizations in the culture of Beowulf. The wraithe of scholarly jigsaw puzzleism has appeared once again. In this chapter, which purports to deal with historical elements in the poem, Lawrence cautions that "it must be remembered that placenames are sometimes used with seeming definiteness in obviously fictitious parts of the poem."[72] If this danger of inauthenticity is

so paramount, why is such concern manifested for the historicity of the society which forms the background for the poem; the return is perhaps little more fruitful than a study of the lives of heroines in Shakespeare's plays. Lawrence moves gradually into a comparison of Beowulf with the social conditions suggested in the Prose Edda. Here he suggests that "Germanic society is best analyzed on the basis of the two great principles of political allegiance and family allegiance."[73] Then he discusses how this controls the style and tone of the poem as well as Norse and Germanic parallel sources.

From this, Lawrence moves, in Chapter Three, to a discussion of the tragedies of the Royal Houses, commenting upon the magnificence at the beginning of Beowulf which is used effectively as a contrast with the sense of gradual decline and decay implicit with greater clarity as the poem progresses. By the end of the chapter, he has moved from a discussion of the historical elements as historical elements and has come to recognize in Beowulf a kind of archetypal hero. Here reality and the supernatural meet, for

> the fictitious Beowulf, as protecting hero and glorious sovereign, was, by exercise of poetic imagination, fitted into the line of Geat monarchs, and how his death and the final extinction of his people were explained as due to the curse resting on the dragon's gold, will be traced in a later chapter. Historic facts, with which we are here concerned, gave him his setting, but could adorn his exploits with little of definite political importance. After the epic account is closed, he remains, despite all his royal dignities, a strayed reveller from fairyland.[74]

Why then pursue him relentlessly through historical elements? Why not give him over to the students of fantasy, of imagination, of poetry?

In Chapter Four, Lawrence deals with the puzzle of the Finnsburg episode and the Finnsburg fragment. He suggests that the story is "quite unconnected with the main business of the epic."[75] This position was one with which subsequent critics who would defend the relevance of the digressions for the artistic integrity of Beowulf would take exception. From this opening comment, Lawrence proceeds to summarize the fragment and the episode before moving to a comment on poets in a Germanic society who "loved to draw themes for drama from conflicts between different aspects of tribal duty, or between such obligations and the facts of human life."[76] This possible explanation for the purpose of the digression escapes Lawrence who prefers to move into attack on Chambers' account of the historical and temporal relationship of the fragment and the story. He cites Chambers' argument that a "man may be touchy about being taunted, without being regarded as having done anything disgraceful."[77] "But" Lawrence replies,"it was disgraceful, according to the code for warriors to give allegiance to the man responsible for the death of their lord; there is no getting around that. The point is that extraordinary circumstances, for which the code did not provide, forced the Danes into that position."[78] Precisely what the significance of this disagreement is

to the enjoyment of the poetry of the poem might be difficult for the scholarly or the unscholarly to perceive.

The next chapter treats of Scyld and Breca scenes in the poem, explaining that "we now turn to themes in which the supernatural is the essential part of the narrative, in which the element of fantasy is not secondary but fundamental, though rendered speciously plausible by its historic setting, and by realistic detail."[79] He speaks of Beowulf, who "meets his demons clear-eyed, with the heroism that springs not only from valor but from consciousness of virtue, and from faith in the True God."[80] This last proves difficult for a fictitious hero in a pagan epic which can only be understood by grasping the society which pervades the poem. The chapter then treats the mythological theories of interpretation which were the characteristic theme of the Nineteenth Century. Müllenhoff who, by virtue of his position as an early interpreter as well as a good one, draws most of Lawrence's fire as he attacks the mythological approach, refuting effectively the basis for that particular school of interpretation. Lawrence concludes: "If the investigator, from his study of the general processes of early poetry, believes that a mythological foundation must underlie the action, there is no way of proving that he is wrong. But unless new evidence appears, there is no way for him to prove that he is right, or to explain the faded allegory convincingly. Something more than a purely imaginative reconstruction is

necessary. It is surprisingly easy to fit a nature-allegory into any simple story."[81]

The next chapter, which covers Grendel and his dam, is in reality a defense for the theory which replaced the mythological theory, the folklore theory. Avoiding the issue of Christian influences, Lawrence says of demons: "Of such origin, no matter what we conceived their significance to have been, were the monsters in Beowulf, pagan incarnations of joyless evil. Their attributes embody what men most feared in the world about."[82] This he sees as the basis for the folklore elements which seem to pervade Beowulf. The common nature of these elements is remarked upon: "The story told of them contains very marked and individual features which set it apart and relate it to similar stories in various parts of the world."[83]

Lawrence does recognize the influence of Panzer in establishing the plausibility of the folklore theory through his work published in 1910. He follows the lead of Panzer, Chambers, and Klaeber in pointing out similarities in Beowulf and in other folk tales ranging from Grettissaga to Bjarki's story to the 14th century Saga of Samson the Fair. Lawrence concludes this defense of the folk tale theory by commenting: "The main point to observe is how, despite all changes in the passing of years the old tale preserved something of its original setting and incident, through a study of which we may better understand its earlier history."[84] Thus, he moves

once again from the realmof appreciation to that of understanding, and threatens the poem once again with analysis.

Chapter Seven treats the dragon. Lawrence suggests that it was probably added to the story because "after the Bear's Son--slayer of two demonic beings, one in a hall and the other underground--had been made into a great Scandinavian warrior and prince, and his adventures placed in an historic setting, a suitable and glorious death had to be provided for him. So the dragon episode was added."[85] This is an attempt to explain the last one thousand lines of the poem. However, it again supposes the rather haphazard artist that the poet must have been. The real purpose of the conclusion of the poem seems to have been to "celebrate the two great ideals of Germanic warrior life: the conduct of the perfect retainer and the conduct of the perfect king."[86] This fits with Lawrence's idea that "The controlling theme of the whole poem, which gives it unity, bridging the long gap of fifty years in Beowulf's life, and placing the originally separate Grendel and dragon adventures in logical relation to each other, is the glorification of the ideal hero and king."[87] Thus, Lawrence does finally suggest a unifying theme for this poem which he almost unconsciously seems to malign.

In the final chapter, Lawrence treats the development and composition of the epic as it is manifested in Beowulf. The chapter suggests the Liedertheorie but argues that the Beowulf legends were brought across to Britain by late

colonists in the second half of the Sixth Century. That there it was refined, and Christianized. Lawrence then adds a statement which seemingly contradicts his earlier position on Christianity in the poem, for he says that "careful research has shown that the Christian elements are in all probability not interpolated, but an integral part of the epic."[88] How then can the poem be basically pagan? Lawrence's main problem in the book seems to be that from which Malone's work suffers. In an attempt to popularize ideas about the poem, he rehashes old ideas that have been bandied about enough to have deserved some rest. He also tends to generalize some ideas in order to simplify them for popular consumption; in doing this, he makes statements about the poem which not only seem to be of questionable value, they seem sometimes to be contradictory.

In 1929, "The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf," the work of an extremely competent German scholar, Levin L. Schücking, supported in greater depth and with a greater attempt at scholarly justification Lawrence's contention that the poem is designed to demonstrate the virtues of the good king.[89] Schücking believes the poem to be the work of one man, and believing that it is "a mirror of a prince poem," the author demonstrates the existence of several attributes of the ideal king to support the argument that the poet, by combining "Germanic-heroic and Stoic-Christian" ideals for kingship intended the poem for the purpose of demonstrating the "ideal

of kingship." This ideal is evident in the original title of the article, "Das Königsideal im Beo-wulf."[90] This article is significant to the progress of Beowulf criticism, for it treats the poem as an entity written by a conscious artist who intended it for a specific purpose: the education of a young prince.

Although Schücking's ideas concerning the date of the origin of the poem have generally met with strong attack, his position on the poem in 1929 suggests a growing tendency to move from examination of the poem as a linguistic and social phenomenon of primarily historical importance to an increasing tendency to view it as a purposeful work of art. Schücking's idea concerning the interpretation of the poem as a "mirror of a prince" poem was not new within this article; Schücking had suggested the idea in "Wann entstand der Beowulf?"[91] and Andreas Heusler had agreed in Altgermanische Dichtung.[92] In 1929, however, it demonstrated the movement toward treatment of the poem as a work of art. The effect of the criticism of the previous fifteen years was evident in the work of the thirties.

The influence of the folk tale interpretation of the poem popularized in Germany by Panzer, in England and America by Chambers and Lawrence, is suggested in, for example, an article by Jones in 1930 entitled "Beowulf 2596-99."[93] (One can only be awed by the brilliantly creative titles which Beowulf scholars often pick for their publications.) In it, he argues that the desertion by the retainers

probably came from the "Bear's Son." The right parallel would have been at Grendel's dam's mere. The desertion was changed to the dragon scene, however, to avoid the possible humiliation to the Geats by having them desert in front of foreigners. The first part of this random article is strongly supported by its previous suggestion in the examinations of folk tale parallels in Chambers'. The latter suggestion, concerning the matter of possible humiliation in front of foreigners, is possibly important, even in the light of the blood bond which existed between ring giver and ring taker in Germanic culture, a bond which might symbolize something greater than simply a matter of humiliation if taken within the context of the poem as an artistic whole. Obviously the idea of Beowulf, the work of art, while approaching the mere of scholars had not yet entirely arrived.

1930 also saw a new edition of Chambers' book, Beowulf: An Introduction. The significant importance of this particular edition is found in Part V, which surveys recent work on Beowulf to 1930.[94] Instead of attempting an entirely new synthesis, something he need not have done, for his earlier work had certainly neither been surpassed nor antiquated, Chambers reviewed the critical trends and directions of the previous ten years. This lengthy review is of special importance, for it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, work which suggests that the critical work in the area

had appeared both long enough and frequently enough to allow for an introspective analysis of what had been going on. It demonstrates that the study of Beowulf criticism, apart from studies on Beowulf, had become a distinct field for scholarly analysis.

Chambers begins Part V with an introductory chapter, which first praises the work of Klaeber and Lawrence. Of Klaeber's edition he states: "Klaeber's edition of Beowulf (1922: new issue, with additions, 1928) is the most important edition published since Kemble's of 1833. It is impossible to praise too highly the range and the accuracy of its scholarship."[95] From one scholar to another, this is unusual, and extremely complimentary, praise. Of Lawrence's Beowulf and Epic Tradition, he says: "This covers much the same ground as my own monograph, in about half the number of words. . . . His book is certainly not as argumentative as mine . . . [but] most important additions to our knowledge are made. . . ."[96] After the unequivocal praise given to Klaeber's work, this commendation sounds rather like a backhanded swipe at someone who had done commendable work in the same area in which the author was working himself. Chambers immediately demonstrates still another attitude toward those working in this sparse but sweet Germanic vineyard. Of a critic who had said that "it seems presumptuous in any man, who has little or no new evidence, to attempt the solution of a mass of problems, on which a

large number of able investigators have been unable to reach agreement,"[97] Chambers only replied, "It is my peculiar good fortune to have been followed in my presumptuous sin by two such fellow-sinners as Klaeber and Lawrence."[98]

The combination of the three is impressive; it should frighten almost any spirit of general dissent from the soul of a reviewer. Chambers was right in what was being done by the three; however, he knew that the time had come for larger, more sweeping studies of the poem which would deal in some detail with the specific portions of the poem, but which would be primarily interested in demonstrating the validity of more general position, such as the relationships of all the historical elements to one another. He knew that this had to be done through logic primarily, "For the study of Beowulf is one of those fields where the evidence is already known, and no student can expect to add more than a small proportion of new material. Meanwhile, many acute brains are seeking to arrive at new results and, if novelty be our aim, a very large number of new permutations can be got, even from a small body of evidence, each new combination producing a new theory, inconsistent with the earlier ones."[99]

Following this justification of his efforts, of the directions of scholars who were not frightened by the lack of primary materials nor by the enormity of variety of opinion on the questions surrounding the poem, Chambers

offers a summary of the development of Beowulf criticism to 1930. He begins with a discussion of the 1890's:

> For although, about 1890, a number of efforts were made to get a comprehensive view of these problems, little was done in the following thirty years by way of a general survey. In 1883, Rönning had published his study, Beovulfs-Kvadet, a study which, in a remarkable way, anticipates the results to which scholars, after nearly half a century, are now returning. Then, in 1888-1889, had appeared the three monographs of ten Brink, Sarrazin, and (posthumously) Müllenhoff. These had been followed by the "Introduction" which Earle prefixed to his translation of Beowulf in 1892.[100]

These five books represented fundamentally different positions. Chambers chose to consider Rönning's the best balanced of the five. It is ironic, as he points out, that Rönning's was the least influential for, written in Danish, it was little known in the critical arena of the day. (It might be mentioned that it is little known in the critical arena of any day, judging from the absence of reference to it by anyone other than Chambers.)

Between 1892 and 1921, Chambers finds virtually no attempts at a synthesis of opinion, with the exception of Brandl's sketch in Pauls Grundriss. During this period, Beowulf criticism moved away from Germanic dominated linguistic and mythological studies toward an era of early English scholarship. Chambers finds Ker's Epic and Romance exceptional, for Ker concludes that "all epic poetry is written by A, B and an Interpolator." Heusler's Lied and Epos, a study of the Germanic heroic ethos; Olrik's work on early Danish history as reflected in Denmark's ancient heroic poetry, Dansmark-Heltedigtning; Panzer's Beowulfstudien,

a work on folklore in 1910; and Stjerna's studies on archaeological findings are all mentioned. The result of these, and other findings is, Chambers reports, that while great differences of opinion existed in Beowulf criticism in 1890, by 1930, matters had changed: "Whilst the monographs of 1883-92 leave one with a bewildered wondering where truth is to be found amid all this difference, I find an agreement between the views of Klaeber, Lawrence, and myself which is almost embarrassing."[101] Harmony and understanding had come to the community of scholars.

Chambers discusses the similarities among the three on certain matters. While they disagree slightly on the date, Chambers says: "Both Lawrence and Klaeber would, I think, agree that the difference is not worth fighting about. We simply cannot date Beowulf to a quarter of a century."[102] The three also agree on the source: "That Beowulf was written by an Anglian poet of the Age of Bede, working upon earlier lays current in England is a formula as definite as we need ask for." Chambers continues: "such agreement in books published simultaneously and independently does, I think, indicate that certain broad features are emerging from the fog of controversy."[103]

Of course, some critics disagreed with many of the positions of the three; in the remainder of the chapter, Chambers briefly mentions them. In the urgency for conciliation, however, he says: "the difference between the point of view of Cook, Liebermann, Klaeber, Lawrence and myself,

though real, is one which it is important not to exaggerate. The essential thing is the agreement."[104] He concludes the chapter with additional comments on this basic solidarity of scholarship: "Scholarship seems now, after fifty years to be settling down to the view put forward by Rönning in the first elaborate monograph ever published on the Beowulf problem."[105] This view is that the poems upon which the story is based arose among the Geats in Southern Sweden, wandered to Northern England, either directly or by way of the ancient Anglian home, and in England, perhaps in the Eighth Century, were worked into an epic, probably by a Northumbrian poet. And "with this view, neglected as it was in 1883, most people in 1931 would concur."[106] The recognition of this theory in the work of a relatively unknown Beowulf scholar might seem to suggest that the criticism is circular, that no progress was being made. However, the fact that the basic facts were generally accepted at a time that the poem was increasingly receiving treatment as a literary phenomenon indicates that some progress was occurring. Personswould still be arguing over the social and linguistic background of Beowulf thirty years later; however, for the vast majority of critics, the basic battle over the socio-historical background of Beowulf was over. Chambers concludes, "If much that has been written about Beowulf in this past half-century has had to be abandoned, much solid knowledge has been gained. Beowulf study has not

been entirely a wandering in the wilderness, even if the achievement of proven fact is not proportionate to the labour expended."[107]

In the chapter on historical elements, Chambers, despite what he says, does discuss the "Jute Question" again. He gives new evident that the Geats and not the Jutes were the persons referred to as Hygelac's people. He then favors closing the argument, for he says that "it seems to be drifting from reality altogether."[108] Of course, this simple conclusive statement did not end the issue, for every dog must have at least one more day. Discussing archaeological evidence, Chambers links the Vendel-Crow mound and the Kings'mound at Uppsala. He says that "the archaeologists have, then, finally disposed of the only serious historical argument which has ever been brought forward in favour of identifying the Geatas with the Jutes . . . Nerman and Lindqvist can surely claim to have settled for ever that most obstinate of 'philological legends,' the identification of the Geatas with the Jutes."[109] Of Scylding history, he says that "In the past ten years there have been two studies of this period of Scylding history--one by Boer and one by Wessen--in which conclusions fundamentally different from those of Olrik are maintained; and it appears to me in both cases that Olrik is quite demonstrably right in the points which come under dispute."[110]

First, Chambers discusses Boer's critical position:

"Beowulf is a literary production, with a history about which it is imperative to acquire a clear notion, previous to any attempt at comparing contents and subject matter with remote collateral sources."[111] Then Chambers says:

> It is an invidious thing to judge between two eminent scholars, both of whom have passed away. But Boer has insisted upon such comparison, by attacking Olrik's method. Surely, then, the verdict must be that Olrik's method is the right one. Olrik compares all the accounts, and things are found to fall into their places. There is a minimum of mere theorizing; rather the seeing eye of the critic (his intuition as Boer rightly calls it) marshals each bit of evidence in its right place, till we wonder that we could not see it all for ourselves. Against this, Boer erects his method of internal criticism, of an interpretation of certain passages in Beowulf which seems to him convincing; then he dismisses the Scandinavian evidence because it does not agree with this interpretation.[112]

Having dismissed one foe, Chambers moves on to Wessen, who, in a recent publication, had revived the controversy about the nature of the people in the poem: "Wessen accepts as if it were ascertained fact, the inference that the Danes started from Sweden, made a military expedition to Denmark and absorbed the Heruli whom they found there. But he places all this, not c. 250, but c. 500-550."[113] Chambers denies this, for if the absorption of the Heruli by the Danes were put in the third century, it would lie beyond the knowledge of critics to affirm or deny it. What cannot be denied becomes fixed dogma:

> Then Wessen intrudes it into the sixth century, where, however, it will not harmonize with the known data. But our dogma has by now become far too firm to be shaken. . . . Wessen asks us to reject the known data instead. That the Danes were few in number, but

> absorbant, and above all absorbent of Heruli, is the one fixed doctrine to which everything else must at all cost conform. And yet, there is no evidence for any such thing. All we know is that, at some date, certainly before 552, the Danes had driven the Heruli from their seats.[114]

It is much easier to praise the critical efforts of someone if they agree with your own. When, also, one is surrounded by comforting support from other renowned authorities, it is surprisingly easy to launch a rather vicious , if perhaps correct, critical attack upon a fellow critic. Even in the great age of unity, harmony, and understanding in the area of Beowulf criticism, some disagreement did manage to sneak in.

Then, Chambers moves to a general attack of the "name shift" theory arguing that the study of legend has some stable elements. If there were not, he says: "we should have nothing solid to work on. We have got to discriminate."[115] He sometimes does not make clear against what--or who should be discriminated against. Praise of Olrik's book on the history of the Scylding king ends the chapter.

Turning to the non-historical elements, Chambers summaarizes Lawrence's and Panzer's attacks on the myth theory. Chambers thinks that the importance of "Lawrence's demonstration lay in the fact that, if the story as given in the Grettis saga be both independently derived from one original, then, by a comparison of them both together, we ought to be able to form some idea of what that original was like."[116] Like Lawrence, he analyzes Beowulf,

Grettissaga, and Samson the Fair. Chambers sees parallels between the former two and the Bear's Son tale; however, "the essential difference remains--the Bear's Son rescues princesses in the underworld, and it is because they wish to rob him of his princesses that his companions leave him in the lurch. There is nothing of this in Beowulf."[117] With this distinction, Chambers turn to the "hand and the child" tales. He cautions afterward that just as mythologizing can be carried too far (Lawrence's suggestion) so, too, can searching for folktale parallels. In Beowulf, the individual genius of the poet must be accounted for. This advice might be of some interest to the current school of oral formulaic theorists as well.

On dating, Chambers introduces the disagreement which Liebermann, Cook, and Schücking were engaged in. Chambers settles the argument in a strange way; he discusses the question of Christianity and remarks that Beowulf is a poem which stands between the world of German paganism and Anglo-Christianity; it seems "natural to place it in the first generation after the Conversions."[118] Having condemned others for sloppy justification, this argument seems rather shallow proof for dating the poem.

In the last chapter of Part V, Chambers presents versions from several languages of analogues to the Beowulf story, which serve as a sort of primary evidence for the assumptions which he earlier made in reference to folktale elements in

the poem. At this point, having attempted, and in large part succeeded, in providing a critical summary of Beowulf criticism up to 1930, Chambers ends his edition. The critics, many of whom refused to hear his sound plea for unification, kept on, however, pouring forth at an increasing rate their own opinions on all aspects of the poems.

1932 was the publication year of a dual volume of criticism by Johannes Hoops. The first volume of the set, Beowulfstudien, provides an introduction to the second, more significant volume, Kommentar zum Beowulf.[119] The first volume is comprised of two parts: first "Abhandlungen"-- a series of sixteen essays which lay down principles of textual criticism by considering various passages in the poem, or essays on it; second "Kritischer Einzelkommentar"--where a great number of small points are carefully discussed for the illumination which Hoops can bring to them. The second volume consists of a sort of running commentary on the poem. Hoops' work has found an established place in Beowulf criticism in the English-speaking world. By and large, however, the service it provides is an enormous number of detailed points to which other critics can turn for justification of their arguments. The general impression is that more critics refer to the studies by Hoops as significant works than actually have attempted to incorporate his scholarship into their own work.

In the rather freewheeling world of Beowulf criticism in English, the analysis of minute detail in which Hoops excels is viewed as tedious. Suggestive of this view of his work are the two reviews of them by Malone in 1933. In reviewing the former volume, Malone praises the artistry of the scholar briefly and then simply summarizes the content of the volume. In reviewing the second volume he does more; he institutes a series of comments, perhaps forty, which are specific points of disagreement with Hoops' analyses. The review gives the impression of being a picky attack on specifics rather than an attempt to provide the reader with a general summary of the purpose of the book or of its place in Beowulf criticism. Hoops' works were, and have remained, relatively unknown, but widely referred to in works of competent scholarship.

Analysis of specifics in the poem in order to find unifying artistic elements continued to rule in the critical arena. By the mid-thirties the trend in title indicates this approach. Studies were appearing which, like Schücking's in 1929, dealt with a specific point in the poem and were titled with a reference to the specific consideration. Titles with the formula "_____ in [or of] Beowulf" began to appear with increasing frequency. Some were insignificant, some of considerable importance.

Two such articles which appeared in 1934 were John O. Beaty's "The Echo Word in Beowulf," [120] and Arthur DuBois's

"The Unity of Beowulf."[121] The former argues with examples that there are words in the poem which repeat the same sound such as "secg" and "secgan"; these paired words, although not alliterative or the same in meaning, suggestively echo one another and thus provide multiple levels of meaning to words which would otherwise not have the meanings. This particular article has become a relatively important item in Beowulf criticism in recent years, for with the rise of oral-formulaic studies and their concomitant advocates, Beaty's article has received attention as one study which supports the kind of oral artistry suggested by the oral-formulaic approach.

DuBois's article, "The Unity of Beowulf," also deals with the idea of the artistry of the poet's approach. It develops in this manner: the poem is unified. The first part of the poem and the historical digressions, exalt the Geats; the latter part describes their downfall. The episodes point to the theme. He calls the poem "an elaborate symphony of variations, beginning in the kenning, including the episodes and beastly monsters, and culminating in the last part, which is a variation upon the first."[122] This attempt to analyze the poem in harmonic terminology is not the greatest weakness of the study. It tries to deal with too many facets: the history, the fantastic elements (notice the division of the parts into historic and non-historic , which by now has become a commonplace) and more. The

concomitant failure to treat any part with sustained serious analysis leads to lack of substantiation. Thus, it fails to convince the reader. The general approach, that the poem is an integral artistic unit, including the digressions, indicates the changing attitude toward the poem as the work of a conscious artist, an idea that first became evident in some casual remarks of Klaeber's in the early twenties.

In 1935, Ritchie Girvan's book, Beowulf and the Seventh Century:Language and Content, which dealt only indirectly with Beowulf but which attempted to unify the conglomerate opinions concerning the social background of the poem at the time it was written, appeared.[123] Divided into three chapters, the argument is developed in the following way. First, Girvan discusses some language characteristics: a conclusion is reached that the poem was written down "later than Caedmon, not earlier, that is, than about 670."[124] Reasoning from this rather well-established position, Girvan continues: "If I had to decide a date for its composition within reasonable limits, I should decide for 680-700. That was the period when Northumbria was at the height of its greatness politically and artistically; it was also the period when it was on the edge of decline."[125]

In Chapter Two, the author engages in a general study of conditions described in the poem--tapestry, ship masts, etc.--to suggest a setting in Northumbria. He says: "I have tried to show a close correspondence between 7th

century conditions in Northumbria and the poem both in the material and intellectual side. It should not be forgotten that we know more of Northumbria just then than any other part of England, but I think we know enough to confirm belief that the correspondence is closer than elsewhere."[126] This assumption, which supports in some detail the conclusions of Chambers, Klaeber, and Lawrence on the matters of dating and locating the poem, helped to more securely establish Ritchie's position. However, as Whitelock would demonstrate some fifteen years later, the questions were not conclusively answered.

In Chapter Three, Girvan argues that Beowulf was a real person who became enriched in folk-tale. There, his powers had to be magnified in order to compare favorably with traditionally enlarged elements in folk-tales. The latter part of this position has been argued with some success in more recent times.[127] The former part, that Beowulf was a real person, is a position which Girvan treats with much less conclusive skill than the matters of the first two chapters. Acceptance of Girvan's argument, or acceptance of Lawrence's position that Beowulf was fictitious was in 1935, and still is, a conjectural and probably rather insignificant point. After all, the reality of a character in a story depends, as Beowulf critics were beginning to accept, not on the reality of the character outside the artistic work, but only on the artist's treatment

of him within the bounds dictated by that artist's creative imagination.

Theories of literary aesthetics and Beowulf scholarship may often approach one another, but are rarely united in one spirit. There are exceptions, of course. That was established in 1936 in the work of an English scholar when he combined appreciation of aesthetics, scholarly training and experience, creative imagination with pure writing skill in a lecture which, when published, was to become the single most famous article, by far the wittiest, and perhaps the greatest commentary on Beowulf to ever appear. It is, of course, J.R.R. Tolkien's famous statement on the treatment of Beowulf by the scholarly world, and on the theme of the poem, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics,"[128] which suggests an identity relationship. Both, it is implied, harm Beowulf. The former by consciously initiating harm to the hero, the latter by unintentionally misreading the purpose of the work he appears in. Tolkien suggests that although he has not "been a man so diligent in my special walk as duly to read all that has been printed on, or touching on, this poem," he has read enough to venture the opinion that

> Beowulfiana is, while rich in many departments, specially poor in one. It is poor in criticism, criticism that is directed to the understanding of a poem as a poem. It has been said of Beowulf itself that its weakness lies in placing the unimportant things at the centre and the important on the outer edges . . . I think it profoundly untrue of the poem, but strikingly true of the literature about it. Beowulf has been used as a quarry of fact and fancy far more assiduously than it has been studied as a work of art.[129]

Wishing to talk about Beowulf as a poem, Tolkien commences a summary discussion of the kind of talk that had occupied much of Beowulf criticism before his time. He suggests that "Beowulf was christened by Wanley Poesis--Poeses Anglo-Saxonicae egregium exemplum. But the fairy godmother later invited to superintend its fortunes was Historia. And she brought with her Philologia, Mythologia, Achaeologia, and Laographia. Excellent ladies. But where was the child's name-sake? Poesis was usually forgotten; occasionally admitted by a side-door; sometime dismissed upon the door-step."[130] Tolkien makes this point because he believes there can be only two reasons for approaching any poem mainly as an historical document. First, if the critic is not concerned with poetry at all, then this he suggests is a legitimate approach. Secondly, "if the so-called poem contains in fact no poetry."[131] With this position, Tolkien takes exception explaining that Beowulf is, as Wanley suggested, eminently a poem.

Tolkien then summarizes a number of conflicting views on Beowulf, which had appeared over the previous half-century suggesting that the only point of agreement was that the poem was worth studying. In this study, Tolkien continues by arguing against Ker with whom he takes exception especially on the significance of dragons. Whereas Ker speaks of dragons as common in literature before Beowulf, Tolkien argues that "In northern literature there are only two that are significant."[132] Omitting from consideration Mithgarthsormr, Tolkien finds only Fafnir and Beowulf's bane. This,

he submits, "is not a wilderness of dragons."[133] He then suggests that the judgment of Chambers and others that "the important matters are peripheral, the least important central"[134] in the poem is unfair to the artistic integrity of the poet: "Any theory that will allow us to believe that what he did was of design, and that for that design there is a defense that may still have force, would seem more probable."[135] What, Tolkien continues, is the defensible position? The special virtue in Beowulf? "It resides, one might guess, in the theme and the spirit this has infused into the whole."[136] A reasonable enough position it might seem. Tolkien suggests that this spirit of the theme has been overlooked because of the tendency of critics to examine the poem too freely in skeletal form for purposes of comparison. He suggests that skeletal plots, summaries, and antiquarian rather than critical curiosity about the poem have diverted genuine attention away from the poem as a whole. Beowulf is, he argues, like myth "alive at once and in all its parts, and dies before it can be dissected."[137] Tolkien maintains: "The significance of a myth is not easily pinned on paper by analytical reasoning. It is at its best when it is presented by a poet who feels rather than makes explicit what his theme portends . . . unless he is careful, and speaks in parables, he will kill what he is studying by vivisection."[138]

Tolkien then, having argued for a study of the poem in less than skeletal form, disagrees with the opinions that

the wrong thing is at the center of the poem. He says: "The particular is at the outer edge, the essential in the center."[139] This essential theme is concerned with the relationship of the monsters to Beowulf. It is a tragic theme, it is the theme that "lif is læne; eal scæceth leoht and lif." This is the theme; Beowulf is mortal man, doomed to die. "He is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy."[140] The monsters, he argues, are essential to the theme, for they are the instruments for depicting Beowulf's vitality in the early parts of the poem and of providing his instrument of death when he grows old and, naturally, decays in power. Basic to this theme, Tolkien finds the potent element of Northern courage. This is one of the elements of the Nordic-Christian fusion in the poem. This theory of courage he calls "the great contribution of early Northern literature."[141] In this theory, the hero is called upon to fight on the side of the Northern Gods. These Gods "are on the right side, though it is not the side that wins. The winning side is 'Chaos' and 'Unreason'--but the gods, who are defeated, think that defeat no refutation."[142] This theory of conflict was influential in the poet's day as it was to his Northern ancestors (and to his descendents as well.)

There is something admirable about a man who, one way or another, must deal with the problems which confront him in this world. He can, like Beowulf, fight. This potent

elemental courage works: martial heroism for its own end. "But we must remember that the poet of Beowulf saw clearly: the wages of heroism is death."[143] Thus, the poet tells us, man can seek for "comitatus" and"leof dædum" in a courageous stand against the darkness which surrounds the fire of the hall, knowing full well that for him someday, the fire will go out. For Beowulf it is only appropriate that, having killed monsters, things of evil as a youth, he should find his fate not in some battle or from a treacherous friend, but from a dragon: "a thing made by imagination for just such a purpose."[144] That this fear of the dark, the unknown, the evil something was universal, not a social phenomenon of one temporal period but a common fear of all men at all times, was something which the poet knew and which Tolkien knew; something which too many less imaginative critics have apparently missed. This, then, says Tolkien, is the appeal of the poem not to a time but to all time, even to our time, for each man must bravely struggle against the darkness "until the dragon comes." It comes as no surprise that the author of The Lord of the Rings should have understood what the Beowulf poet was saying in the spirit of his poem; Tolkien, after all, was speaking in England in 1936. The darkness was already descending upon Europe.

CHAPTER II

NOTES

[1] Beowulf: An Introduction to the Study of the Poem with a Discussion of the Stories of Offa and Finn (Cambridge, 1921).

[2] (Boston, 1922).

[3] Chambers, p. 2.

[4] Chambers p. 10.

[5] Chambers, p. 37.

[6] Chambers, p. 37.

[7] Chambers, p. 37.

[8] Chambers, p. 46.

[9] Chambers, p. 47.

[10] Chambers, p. 47.

[11] Chambers, p. 51.

[12] Chambers, p. 51.

[13] Chambers, p. 52.

[14] Chambers, p. 54.

[15] Chambers, p. 62

[16] Chambers, p. 68.

[17] Chambers, p. 85.

[18] Chambers, p. 86.

[19] Chambers, p. 86.

[20] Chambers, p. 88.

[21] Chambers, p. 102.

[22] Chambers, p. 103.

[23] Chambers, p. 104.

[24] Chambers, pp. 106-107.

[25] Chambers, p. 105.

[26] Chambers, p. 105.

[27] Chambers, p. 115.

[28] Chambers, p. 115.

[29] Chambers, p. 120.

[30] Chambers, p. 128.

[31] Chambers, p. 248.

[32] Chambers, p. 248.

[33] Chambers, p. 255.

[34] Chambers, p. 257.

[35] Chambers, p. 262.

[36] Chambers, p. 296.

[37] Chambers, p. 329.

[38] Chambers, p. 380.

[39] Chambers, p. 381.

[40] Chambers, p. 387.

[41] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xxi.

[42] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xxvi.

[43] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xlviii.

[44] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. xlix.

[45] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. li.

[46] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lii.

[47] Klaeber, Beowulf, pp. liv-lv.

[48] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lvii.

[49] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lviii.

[50] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxi.

[51] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. lxviii.

[52] Klaeber, Beowulf, p. ciii.

[53] "Interpretations and Emendations of Early English Texts, IX," Anglia, XL (1922), 63-96.

[54] PMLA, XLII (1927), 268-313.

[55] MLR, XXIII (1928, 207-208, and MLR, XXIV (1929), 63.

[56] 2nd ed. (Manchester, 1923).

[57] Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1928).

[58] (Cambridge, Mass., 1928).

[59] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. vii.

[60] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. viii.

[61] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. xi.

[62] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 6.

[63] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 9.

[64] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 9.

[65] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 15.

[66] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 20.

[67] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 23.

[68] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 26.

[69] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 26.

[70] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 26.

[71] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. xi.

[72] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 33.

[73] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 53.

[74] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 106.

[75] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 107.

[76] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 117.

[77] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 125.

[78] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 126.

[79] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 129.

[80] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 131.

[81] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 150.

[82] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 161.

[83] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 164.

[84] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 203.

[85] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 206.

[86] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 226.

[87] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 229.

[88] Lawrence, Beowulf and Epic Tradition, p. 258.

[89] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 35-50.

[90] MHRA Bulletin, III (1929), 143-154.

[91] Schücking, "The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf," p. 36.

[92] Schücking, "The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf," p. 36.

[93] MLN, XLV (1930), 300-301.

[94] 3rd ed. with a supplement by C.L. Wrenn (Cambridge, Mass. 1959).

[95] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. [389].

[96] Chambers, 3rd ed., pp. 389-390.

[97] Chambers, 3rd ed,,p. 390.

[98] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 390.

[99] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 390.

[100] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 391.

[101] Chambers, 3rd ed.,pp. 391-392.

[102] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 393.

[103] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 396.

[104] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 398.

[105] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 400.

[106] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 400.

[107] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 400.

[108] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 408.

[109] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 418.

[110] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 423.

[111] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 428.

[112] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 429.

[113] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 434.

[114] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 436.

[115] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 441.

[116] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 453.

[117] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 477.

[118] Chambers, 3rd ed., p. 489.

[119] (Heidelberg, 1932) and (Heidelberg, 1932).

[120] PMLA, XLIX (1934), 365-373.

[121] PMLA, IL (1934), 374-405.

[122] DuBois, p. 403.

[123] (London, 1935).

[124] Girvan, p. 25.

[125] Girvan, p. 25.

[126] Girvan, p. 51.

[127] Girvan, pp. 75-80.

[128] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), 51-104.

[129] Tolkien, p. 51, 52.

[130] Tolkien, pp. 52-53.

[131] Tolkien, p. 53.

[132] Tolkien, p. 59.

[133] Tolkien, p. 59.

[134] Tolkien, p. 60.

[135] Tolkien, p. 61.

[136] Tolkien, p. 62.

[137] Tolkien, p. 63.

[138] Tolkien, p. 63.

[139] Tolkien, p. 67.

[140] Tolkien, p. 68.

[141] Tolkien, p. 70.

[142] Tolkien, p. 70.

[143] Tolkien, p. 97.

[144] Tolkien, p. 86.

CHAPTER III

1940-1960: THE ERA OF AESTHETICS

Quite understandably, the quantity of criticism dropped off considerably during the war years for scholars, like lesser men were engaged in other pursuits designed to enlighten one another on the way toward a more civil human society. There was some publication during even these years, however. B.J. Timmer, for instance, published another article concerned with the pagan-Christian controversy over the poem. His was entitled "Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry."[1] Although dealing with the poetry of the period in general, he says about Beowulf specifically that "what comes out of Beowulf is not the old, Germanic belief in Fate, but a Christian resignation to the inevitability of the course of events as they are ordained by God's Providence."[2] He recognizes the existence of 'wyrd' but he suggests that it "has become adapted to Christian ideas"; he thinks it is different, however, from Christian resignation and that 'wyrd' is best "reached by approaching the subject from an entirely different point of view"[3] from that of Christian resignation. What the suggested approach is is not made clear, for an alternative approach

is never offered. Timmer did believe that pagan Germanic ideas had been baptized, however, for in another article, published in 1944 on the subject of "Heathen and Christian Elements in Old English Poetry,"[4] he states that heathen elements were adapted to Christian terminology. The very conception of life made the transition necessary. Praise of worldly fame as the best that man could attain became "praise of man will live ever afterwards among the angels."[5] Exactly how this might apply to Beowulf is not made clear, although the article uses the poem to discuss the transition to Christian culture during Anglo-Saxon times. These two articles added to the growing quantitative evidence that the poem, as a product of a Christian culture, must be a Christian poem; their very brevity in treating such a vast subject limits their effectiveness, however. Such seemed to be the case of Beowulf criticism in general during this time when great energies were being directed elsewhere.

There was, however, one extremely significant publication which appeared during the midst of the war; it was John Collins Pope's excellent book, The Rhythm of Beowulf,[6] which came out in 1942. The ideas in it had been presented first at a national meeting of the Modern Language Association before the war. One reason for the delay in publication of the ideas was clarified in the preface where Pope acknowledges his debt to "those with whom I venture to disagree."[7] This was the spirit which urged him on to

extraordinary thoroughness. Pope attains this thoroughness so completely that he frequently obfuscates the meaning of the message in his anxiety to provide substantiating evidence. In his introduction, Pope states that "metrical studies of ancient poetry have at least two immediate aims, the establishment of the text and the recovery of the pleasure inherent in verse. We have gained much if we can feel reasonably certain that the words are the poet's own, but unless we know also the rhythm to which he set them, half their glory has departed."[8] He then laments over the difficulty in understanding Old English poetry where the meaning is normally clear, but the metric patterns are not. He concludes the introduction: "when one considers the learning and ingenuity that have been bestowed on the problem and the instability and discordance of the results, one is likely to conclude that Germanic poetry was a very queer and unintelligible thing, or else that some vital clue has been lost."[9] Pope chooses the latter alternative in the best tradition of scholarship; he sets out to discover the lost clue.

His first step is to give lengthy and detailed analyses of the three best metric analyses which had preceded him; he then comments on what he thinks were the mistakes in each. The first is the five-type system of scansion "which reached its fullest expression in 1893 with the publication of Sievers' Altgermanische Metrik."[10] He speaks of the characteristic sequences of syllables, long or short,

stressed and unstressed, which Sievers identified once and for all and classified into a convenient form. Pope says: "the descriptive portion of Sievers' work is fundamentally sound, and must always be of service."[11] Pope even concludes that the five types in the Sievers system, A,B,C,D, and E, will retain these names since they are so familiar to students of the subject. The author then moves to a discussion of the two major mistakes which he thinks exist in the Sievers' system. The first is that the five types work well enough for scansion, but they fail to allow for the rhythm of verse. He continues: "it is only when one comes to the major problem of verse--its effect on the ear--that the influence of Sievers becomes truly damaging."[12] Pope believes that Sievers recognized this weakness and tried to correct it ten years later in his "Schallanalyse," which led to the second mistake, for the attempt tried to account for rhythm without heed of alliteration or accentuation; it is based solely upon subjective faith.

Pope next discusses the work of Sievers' best known and most influential rivals in the matter of metrics, William Ellery Leonard and Andreas Heusler. He speaks of the basic lack of a precise system in the case of Leonard, whose general views appeared in an article in 1918[13] and whose subsequent statements move steadily closer to Heusler's. A modification of Kaluza's "four accent" theory, Leonard's differs in that Kaluza's system accents four simple

measures in the half-line of verse instead of Heusler's two compound measures which Leonard adopts. Both Kaluza and Leonard granted that two of the four accents are strong, two weak; they also agreed that the accents do not always follow the pattern strong-weak/strong-weak, which gives two measures of quadruple time. The difficulty with Leonard's system, Pope contends, is that while it is better than Kaluza's because it allows for variety of patterns by the inclusion of some kind of rests, it still ignores the complexities of verse patterns which are not obviously strong-weak/ strong-weak.

Moving next to Heusler, Pope states that if his own theory could not be accepted, Heusler's represents the only possible adequate alternative. Common to both of their theories is "the assumption that the normal half-line of verse contains two measure of quadruple time, so that the multitude of rhythmic forms may be viewed as so many variations of the type . . . /xxxx/xxxx, where 'x' represents the time normally occupied by a grammatically short, accented syllable, and the dots denote possible anacrusis (according to Heusler, not limited in number of syllables). In Heusler's system, but not in mine, this 'x' represents a quarter-note; the ample measure thus provided enabled him to include within their bounds the hypermetric as well as the normal verses."[14]

Having explained this basic theory, Pope then lists the rules which Heusler postulated from it: first "every

verse must contain two syllables capable of bearing primary accent";[15] second, "these are placed at the head of each measure"; third, "At the middle of each measure there is normally another syllable bearing secondary accent, but the place of this syllable may be filled by a rest, or, what is rhythmically the same thing, by the prolongation of a preceding syllable"; fourth, "as many additional syllable may be included between these strongest points as can be spoken in the time allotted to the measure"; fifth, "any number of syllables may precede the first primary accent." The genius of this system, Pope points out, is that "Heusler, by a right understanding of rhythm, produced, instead of the amorphous types of Sievers, consistently metrical variations of a single pattern."[16]

The two errors that Pope find in this system, which he considers the only possible alternative to his own, are that first, Heusler has no sense of tempo, and second, the theory of unlimited anacrusis is quite implausible. After a discussion of the nature of anacrusis in Germanic poetry, Pope moves from Heusler's doctrine of metrics to his own. The summary transition is an adequate explanation of the differences between the two:

> The real reason for Heusler's doctrine of anacrusis is that he regarded it as inevitable; and if his interpretation of the alliteration is correct, then that is indeed the case. If the alliteration must always introduce the first measure of the second half-line, we must accept extrametric anacrusis whether we like it or not.

> Examination, however, will show that this so-called rule is an unnecessary though plausible assumption; that there is good reason to believe that the alliteration often introduced the second measure; and that all these troublesome anti-metrical readings can be dismissed at once and forever.[17]

The grounds for this assertion form a part of the argument on behalf of the new theory, for which the way has now been opened by the author. Pope begins an analysis of his theory.

The analysis is competent, thorough, and difficult for anyone not versed in metric theory to understand. Fortunately, he concludes his argument with a summary analysis of his system:

> We have now examined both the preliminary and the important syllable, and so brought to an end our consideration of types B and C, which were the outstanding obstacle to a consistent rhythm. Anyone who has been patient enough to make trial of the suggested readings will admit, I am sure, that they are neither unduly difficult nor out of harmony with the meaning of the verses. If any further justification were needed, I might add that the initial rests characteristic of the first measure are not the only attractive feature of these readings. The crowding of important syllables in the second measure injects a strong excitement into the poem that it would otherwise lack. Supposing, for a moment, that there would be no objection to the anacrusis, let us set the tame:
>
> Hē ðæs frōfre gebād
>
> beside the triumphant
>
> x Hē ðæs frōfre gebād
>
> and see whether, all other considerations apart, the second measure alone does not assure us of the superiority of the latter form. By this new reading of the B and C verses, the whole poem is transformed. We have escaped from the mere jumble that results from an effort to make sense out of Sievers' feet, from the indifference to alliteration and prose accent that marks his later theories, from the undue emphasis on unimportant syllables and the inconsistencies of Leonard, and from the extrametric anacrusis of Heusler. In place of

> these have emerged, first, the initial rest, utilizing for rhythmic purposes the pauses that language requires; secondly, a seemly consideration for the less important syllables; and thirdly, the zest of a highly charged second measure. A further refinement will be proposed in the next section, but already we can discern in Beowulf not only a strict metre in which every syllable has its place, but some hitherto unsuspected rhythmic variations which add greatly to the vitality and expressiveness of the words. Any Germanic poem, however trivial, stands to gain by these changes. Beowulf, because of its other excellences, gains enormously. Its admirers can now claim for it that formal control and that harmony of rhythm and meaning which are among the foremost signs of great poetry.[18]

The analysis is arduous. The summary is long. However, anyone willing to punish himself through a close reading of the text will find Pope's contribution to the poem, and the literature about the poem, to be vast. Pope concludes with a discussion of the influence of his system upon the theory of harp playing; he then devotes the latter half of the book to a reading of lines from Beowulf to demonstrate the theory. Here he discusses rhythmic variations and concludes with a summary of the locations of various half-line rhymes. In doing so, Pope had made a substantial contribution to the theory of oral formulaic poetry which would soon become popular in Beowulf criticism. This was just one result of the book which, for most people, became the definitive study of the verse patterns and their rhythms in Germanic poetry, especially in Beowulf.

Criticism other than Pope's which dealt with the artistic merits of the poem began to appear with greater frequency after the conclusion of the war. One such matter of

interest was the comparison of Beowulf to the traditional classical epics of western culture. A subject of interest for more general reasons a half century earlier, the matter was treated with greater interest in at least two articles in 1946. One was Rhys Carpenter's commentary on the relationship in Folk Tale, Fiction, and Saga in the Homeric Epics.[19] In it, he compares Beowulf and the Odyssey as tales derived from the original folk tale of the Bear's Son: he does not see any direct transmission from the Odyssey to the Beowulf. While this position does not surprise anyone familiar with the several commentaries on the relationships between Beowulf and the Bear's Son, which had appeared during the previous thirty years, it does add one more statement to the long list of what the poem is not. Its failure to add anything positive to the interpretation of the poem suggests that it belongs with that body of criticism which uses Beowulf as a means to illustrate some idea without actually shedding light on the poem itself. This trend, which would become more noticeable in the fifties, was all the more deplorable because it often was made manifest in some discussion which dealt with matters treated rather thoroughly a decade or more before.

Another article on the subject of Beowulf and the western classic epic was "Beowulf and the Classical Epic."[20] After reviewing some of the pertinent criticism, the author argues that the digressive episodes are acceptable, that

some of the transitions, however, are poorly constructed. Hulbert argues, however, that the same sort of thing is true of classical epics. Furthermore, he contends, the nobility of expression in Beowulf is in many ways superior to classical epics. With less than laudatory praise, he admits that "though sometimes clumsy and too compressed and allusive, Beowulf is well conceived and planned."[21] An attempt at analysis of the art of the poem, this article points to a question which was of considerable importance from the late thirties to the sixties, the matter of the artistic unity of the poem. If it were to be treated as art, how were such matters as the digressions to be explained? Hulbert's attempt is weak because it implies that comparison with classic epics of the Greco-Roman culture is necessary in order to judge a Germanic poem. It does, however, continue the controversy on the relationship of the digressive elements to the unity of the poem; this matter would receive more thorough analysis in the near future.

In 1948, two works appeared which were entitled "Beowulf." One was a poem by Richard Wilbur which eulogized the poem and the mystery of antiquity which surrounded it.[22] It suggests the increasing respect given the poem on literary grounds, even if the respect is cloaked in a mantle of ritualistic awe. The other work, somewhat longer and much less poetic, was another episode in the growing saga of Kemp Malone and his articles named after characters in the poem.[23] In what

is basically an explanatory summary of the poem which incorporates comments from four other Malone articles, he argues that the Beowulf poet follows the Germanic tradition; that the poem is divided into two parts: the first deals with the hero as a young man learning (as in the scop's episodes) and practicing heroism, the latter part deals with an old man who thinks back on his youth before he dies. He claims the Offa episode is discussed as a patriotic linking of English tradition to Germanic tradition. This is a popular account of ideas which had been in the critical arena for over a decade. The fact that Malone wrote about them would certainly make them better known, and would provide further support for the position that the poem is an artistic whole, with the two parts artistically and integrally connected. Although it sometimes seems vague, the article does serve a popularizing purpose. It provides its best light in passing references to the value of some of the digressions as necessary concomitants to the poem, since they are the means by which praise is bestowed, the young educated, and tradition passed on. One is curious when reading the article, however, why Malone would choose to plow a furrow tilled so ably in previous generations.

Certainly the most important article on Beowulf published in 1946 was Hamilton's discussion of "The Religious Principle in Beowulf."[24] She speaks of "the theory of grace, alongside the doctrine of Providence, (which) conditioned

the poet's view of the past and influenced his interpretation of events and agents in his stories."[25] She argues that the only tests for identifying the two forces are "harmony with the prevailing tenor of the poem and congeniality to the intellectual climate in which it flowered."[26] She proceeds, in the four part article, to develop her contentions. In part one, the author argues that Augustine's neo-Platonism was the philosophical and theological force of the times--the Eighth Century in England. She contends that Augustine's concepts of predestined Righteous and Predestined Reprobate, with Divine Grace for the former and not for the latter, strongly influenced the Beowulf poet. In part two, the author reverts to authority to defend the position that Grendel--and the language surrounding Grendel--was suggestive of Scriptural references. She argues that "it is unlikely that Grendel was identified with the race of Cain with any save figurative intent. Grendel is a typical denizen of the Earthly City."[27] As a Reprobate, Grendel was like the archetypal father of Reprobates, Cain. They both represent the kind of Reprobate discussed in The City of God. In part three, Hamilton discusses the possible meanings of 'wyrd' in Beowulf. Although uncertain of its application to the Dragon episode ("Yet here again we do not know what conception of destiny lay back of the poet's words, nor to what extent the sense of doom that attends the passing of Beowulf was dictated by literary art."[28]), she thinks the

Beowulf poet in harmony with Boethius and Alfred in their assertions that Fate and all that is subject to it are controlled by Divine Providence, and 'wyrd' seems to be identical with Providence in most instances. In several places, she does not make clear which kind of 'wyrd' --that which is associated with the pagan meanings of the word, or that which is a kind of evil 'wyrd' associated with fallen angels--is meant. In part four, Hamilton, armed with her analysis in the previous three parts, comes to "the conclusion that he (the poet) regarded 'fate' as a subordinate to the Divine will . . . the only theory that would be consistent with the poet's frequent references to God's protecting care of the Geats and Danes."[29] She further argues that "one or two passages suggest that Beowulf and his companions are recipients of supernatural grace."[30] These passages are the fight in the hall and the excuse for disturbing the Dragon's hoard.

Hamilton's article is well-documented, logical and persuasive. However, although the Christian-pagan controversy would continue interminably, with a modern swing to the side of the pro-Christian explicators, her influential article suggests a weakness in this particular position. The article seems to lack an appreciation for the vitality of a people who were, while professed Christians, still embued in a tradition, almost literally with the air they breathed; they were immersed in a Germanic culture which

could not be separated from the theology of the north. Certainly the two traditions were mingled in the poem, but an argument which purports to establish the Christian religious principles at the heart of the poem on the basis only of the tests of "harmony with the prevailing tenor of the poem and congeniality to the intellectual climate in which it flowered."[31] is jeopardized by the argument that part of the harmony of that intellectual climate was the dark, misty, monster-inhabited part of the soul which was very much a part of the English speaking, but still Germanic thinking people living in England in the Eighth Century.

1949 was also the year of an article entitle "Unferth"[32] written by Woolf in the Malone style. The article argues that Unferth functions as a foil to allow the poet an opportunity to demonstrate Beowulf's virtues by contrast. It further contends that Unferth eventually demonstrates the change possible in a bad man when he meets a brisk man, the value of good example. Certainly an attempt to explain the artistic importance of an enigmatic character in the poem, the article offers suggestions about Unferth that resulted in several running commentaries on the character in the criticism of the following fifteen years. Unferth suddenly emerged as an important character in Beowulf.

In the same year another of those interminable, if invaluable, articles on the meanings of certain words in Old English, which usually use Beowulf for examples because

of its rich word hoard, appeared. This article, by Lumiansky, was called "The Contexts of O.E. 'Ealuscerwen' and 'Meaduscerwen'."[33] It argues that the two words connoted revelry and happiness when they appeared in the poetry. For this reason, 'ealuscerwen' at line 767 of Beowulf is is used to express the regret of the Danes at the possible loss of future revelry in Heorot, if it were destroyed in the hall fight, which it was assumed would follow.[34] A little article, but, unlike so many 'word' articles written on the poem over the years, this one attempted to provide a meaning which would enlighten the artistic richness of the poem by suggesting implicitly a kind of dramatic anticipation. For this, the article is probably in the mainstream of literary appreciation rather than in the older stream of linguistic analysis.

The appearance in 1950 of Adrien Bonjour's monograph, The Digressions in Beowulf,[35] was a significant milestone in the progressive development of Beowulf criticism. Written in 1944, publication was delayed primarily because of the economic pressures which followed the war. When published, it was recognized as the culmination of scholarship on the problem of the digressions and episodes in the poem. Bonjour, following the by now accepted trend toward treatment of the poem as an artistic entity, argues that each digression and episode plays a part toward development of the main theme of the poem. He commences his study with a review of

the critical approaches which had been taken in previous examinations of the digressions. He discusses the Liedertheorie, especially as it appeared in the work of Boer, the most recent of the better advocates of that theory. The summary then moves into a discussion of the opinions of advocates of the artistic unity of the poem. Their attitudes toward the digressions are characterized in the comment Bonjour makes about two of the best critics of the poem: "Both Klaeber and Chambers, although strongly in favour of a unity of authorship in Beowulf, still admit in a way the possibility of some later additions, and they are not the only authorities holding the same opinion."[36] Having given a summary of previous critical opinions, Bonjour states that "the object of the present essay is, generally speaking, a systematic study of the digressions in Beowulf, from a purely artistic point of view. We shall therefore not be concerned, otherwise than incidentally, with their historical or archaeological interest. The main questions which we shall endeavour to answer are these: what part do the various digressions play in the poem considered as a work of art? In what measure are they artistically justified, and what is their relation to the structural (or spiritual) unity of the Poem?"[37] This statement of purpose is remarkable in that it could not have appeared in Beowulf criticism even a short twenty years before. It is more remarkable because Bonjour then accomplishes precisely what

he promised to do. He begins this text with a discussion of the Scyld episode. Having earlier distinguished between a digression, which is more of an adjunction and generally entails a sudden break in the narrative, and an episode which is a moment which forms a real whole and yet is merged in the main narrative, he insists upon the import of the Scyld episode because of its influential position at the beginning of the poem. Having discussed previous theories about it, especially Boer's, he argues for the artistic importance of the episode, for there is a connection between the prologue and the Grendel part which "seems to reside in a certain parallelism--which may not be devoid of a symbolic value--between Scyld himself and Beowulf, however different their respective missions."[38] The coming of each saved the Danes from a calamity.

Another parallel Bonjour finds is in their early years, for the youth of each was undistinguished: "Neither showed the slightest promise of a brilliant future. Scyld was found a wretched and abandoned child and Beowulf is conspicuous for his inglorious youth."[39] Here, Bonjour makes a point which will become a common theme in his study: "In both cases the striking reversal in their fortunes is clearly stressed by the poet."[40] "Whenever the poet alludes to a reversal in the epic in general, it is decidedly in an opposite sense from good to bad (in accordance with the general mood of the poem)."[41] This first contrast is, then,

an example of the commonest technique of the poet, but by moving from bad to good, it is in contrast to the general trend of the remainder of the poem. Another artistic purpose of the poem's episode, says Bonjour, is that the glories of the Danes must be made clear to the listener so that Grendel's attack is comprehended as one perpetrated against a proud and glorious people, not against an insignificant people. This enhances the nature of the calamity and the glory of the one who overcomes the calamity. Bonjour links the episode not only with the Grendel part, but with the poem as a whole. He says that "it acquires a 'transcendental' character if viewed on another plane, as a highly significant parallel and contrast to that fine piece of epic prophecy concerning the future downfall of the Geats themselves, left 'lordless' after Beowulf's death. Indeed, at the very beginning and at the very end of the poem looms the spectre of a 'lordless' time, that worst calamity in Germanic times."[42] This chapter, typical of Bonjour's approach, concludes with a comparison of the symbolism of Scyld sailing gracefully away to another life at his funeral, and the complete end suggested by the burning and burying of Beowulf, a more final kind of death, suggestive of the inevitable fate of his people.

Chapter Two of Bonjour's monograph deals with the familiar historical elements; the traditional division between historical and non-historical is the basic structure of the

entire text. Each historical episode is presented, its significance related and its symbolic value suggested. The first three: Beowulf's fight with the giants, the Ecgtheow digression, and the Unferth intermezzo are linked together. The first introduces Beowulf's skill as a monster killer; the second salves the wounded pride of the Danes by stressing a reference to Beowulf's father which is not altogether flattering, and stressing Hrothgar's own help for Beowulf's father in his time of need; the third salves the pride of the Danes by having their champion come to their pride's defense as best he can and, also, it emphasizes the dramatic importance of the Breca story, thus glorifying Beowulf.

The fourth digression of an historical nature is the fall of Hygelac. This, Bonjour states, "gives us a fine instance of a particular use of contrast characteristic of Beowulf."[43] There is a slight contrast between Hygelac and Beowulf's success. "The touch is slight--as the poet wanted it to be--yet it is already the germ of the tremendous implications which will grow out of the repeated allusions to Hygelac's downfall in the course of the epic."[44] The next digression, the inglorious youth, is best appreciated in contrast with Heremod. Beowulf was an inglorious youth, Heremod a brilliant youth; their roles were reversed when they became men, however: "We have a poor beginning followed by a prodigious ascent contrasted with a brilliant promise

ending in a miserable downfall. This again has a fine dramatic effect, and required no mean artistic sense."[45] The sixth digression, Hygelac's death, Beowulf's return by swimming, his guardianship of Heardred, and the second Swedish war, has as its immediate object "the glorification of Beowulf by a reference to one of his sensational earlier deeds."[46] More importantly, however, it shows the greatness of Beowulf in protecting the right heir to the throne; "by showing so conspicuously how Hygd's confidence in him was well placed, the second part of the episode also serves the cause of Beowulf. The purpose of the poet is to convey the certitude that Beowulf's power was enough not only to repel any invader but even to prevent any attempt at an invasion, even on the part of a hereditary foe--the Swedes, of course."[47] The point is of paramount importance, Bonjour believes, for "there will be no other episode in the poem not connected with the Swedish wars."[48] Henceforth, the historical digressions will continually refocus attention upon the importance of Beowulf in preventing further war with the Swedes, through strength and through his friendship with the Swedish king; this period of grace will end when Weohstan's son, Wiglaf, becomes the symbol of Geat rule. The result will be destruction of the Geat nation by the Swedes.

In the seventh digression, on Hrethel, the end of the Herebeald, the earlier war with the Swedes, and Beowulf's

slaying of Daeghrefn, a significant change in mood occurs; "It is no longer in the heroic or epic mood, but in an elegiac and deeply melancholic tone."[49] The plight of Beowulf, a human who must decay and die, and the plight of the Geats which is fixed inextricably with Beowulf's plight becomes clearer. It continues, for "the recurrence of the allusions to the Swedish wars is part of a conscious and lucidly designed plan."[50] It is suggested further by the next episode, dealing as it does with Weohstan's slaying of Eanmund. In this digression, it is made clear that the hatred of Eadgils for Weohstan who fought against him for Onela will extend to Weohstan's son, Wiglaf. "The fact that Eadgils did not apparently pursue him to avenge his brother's death, (Weohstan having killed Eadgils brother Eanmund), is probably due to his cordial relationship with Beowulf who had assisted him (Eadgils) in his enterprise against Onela."[51] With Beowulf's death, Wiglaf and the Geats will have no protection from the Swedes.

The ninth and last historical digression tells again of Hygelac's fall, and the battle of Ravenswood. It treats then of the actual origin of the Swedish-Geatish feud and depicts the first phase of the war between the two rival peoples. "With the opening of that last digression, the poet allows us for the first time to catch a glimpse of what the future has in store for the Geatish nation."[52] The poet uses once again the technique of contrast. He shows the original

victory of the Geats, but intimates the inevitable time of their final destruction. As Bonjour says, "the choice, then, of the first Swedish-Geatish war at this point in the poem is artistically justified and indirectly renders the whole effect of the epic prophecy even more striking."[53] The picture of the threat to the Geats, so often mentioned in apparently unrelated digressions, becomes clear. The glories of the Geats, like the glories of Beowulf, approach the time of the dragon.

In the third chapter, the non-historical digressions are discussed. The first, the fate of Heorot, is important because it speaks of the "contrast inherent in the sudden rapproachment between a brilliant thing or harmonious situation vividly set forth and a brief intimation of disaster (which) adds, in an effective way, to the impression of melancholy and sadness in which so much of the poem is steeped."[54] The next digressive elements, the stories of Sigemund and Heremod, offer contrast with Beowulf: "The contrast between Sigemund and Beowulf is that while the former survived the Dragon fight, the latter did not."[55] This rather obvious contrast is not as effective as the one with Heremod. Here, Heremod's sorrowful end, unmourned by his people is the opposite of what awaits Beowulf. Thus, the next digression, the tragedy of Heremod, serves as "a kind of exordium to Hrothgar's great 'twenty parson power' speech."[56] This speech is the direct sign and premonition of the career that awaits Beowulf and therefore leads to, and provides a

powerful link with the second part of the poem. The next digression is the Offa one and is admittedly, according to Bonjour, the least apposite in the poem. It does, the author claims, offer a contrast between good rulers and unwise rulers in the persons of Modthryth and Hygd. The last digression is the Finn episode. Here, the point is made that the Beowulf poet stressed the emotional appeal of Hildeburh as a means of stressing the ultimate effect of the central theme: the irresistible force of the enmity between the two tribes. At this point, although he treats summarily of biblical and 'the last survivor' digressions, Bonjour's task is really finished. He concludes this chapter with the same ideas which appear in his conclusion to the text: "We may point out that if Beowulf's personality and actions represent the main thread which runs through the parts of the poem, the theme that connects these episodes with the background of the Dragon part may be considered as a parallel and corresponding thread--both uniting the Grendel and the Dragon parts in a closer web. This is no mean achievement on the part of the Beowulf poet."[57] Bonjour's monograph is of considerable importance, for it lent strong support to those who felt not only that the poem was an artistic whole, but that the only way to approach it was as an integrated work of art. Subsequent criticism would rely heavily upon the arguments presented in this study.

Criticism of the poem was now on the increase, and much of it was of excellent quality. Consider 1951, for instance. One of the articles which appeared and merited serious consideration was J.R. Hulbert's "The Genesis of Beowulf: A Caveat."[58] He attempts an historical view of Beowulf criticism; he chooses to examine the changes by first identifying what he considered to be the general assumptions about the poem which were held in 1900. These included: the belief that Beowulf was only one of many Old English epics; the position that it was mythical, symbolic of forces of nature; the position that it was a mythic story of a mythic divinity or hero, Beowa, who was the source for the poem; the position that Beowulf was a real man; the position that it was an accretion of several lays; the idea that several persons were responsible for compiling it; the idea that it was typical of Germanic, epic, poetic form; and the idea that it was pagan in origin with Christian passages added to it. Hulbert compares this to the characteristics he sees in Beowulf criticism after the appearance of Chambers, Klaeber, and Lawrence. The three men were responsible for popularizing the following ideas about the poem: it is the product of one poet; it originated in folklore, not in mythology; it is the only extensive non-religious poem of Anglo-Saxon times; the author was a Christian; the model for the poem was the Aeneid. Although few would take exception with the former set of characteristics, several

of the latter group, particularly the last point which deals with the Mediterreanean classical sources close to Hulbert's heart, are open to disagreement. Not withstanding this criticism, Hulbert's article was an influential statement of synthesis which ended with the important warning that, in spite of general acceptance of certain ideas, the theories must, because of textual inadequacies, not be considered certain but must be kept as hypothetical assumptions. However, as Chambers point out long ago, these theories are the products of consensus and logical analysis of the few known facts about the poem and can be accepted, with some degree of authenticity, as the basis for future logical analysis of the poem.

Another important article in 1951 was Bloomfield's "Beowulf and Christian Allegory:An Interpretation of Unferth."[59] In it, he points to the earlier article by Woolf, which supports many of the views which Bloomfield presents. He also takes exception to Girvan's claim that the allegory used in the poem was from Germanic poetry. Bloomfield claims allegory as a sign of Christian influences. He arrives at this by discussing the special significance of the name Unferth, the fact that it is the single reference to the name in the poetry, that it was not an Anglo-Saxon name which appears elsewhere, that therefore, "the name in Beowulf has an unusual character and must have the special significance suggested by its accepted meaning."[60] This significance

becomes evident when one realizes that "the author of Beowulf consciously patterned the figure of Unferth after the personified abstractions currently used in the Christian Latin poetry with which he was familiar."[61] Bloomfield does not wish to impose this allegorical analysis on everyone; he submits that "I do not wish to over-emphasize the role of allegory in Beowulf . . . It is primarily a narrative poem . . . Yet, if we recognize allegory in the work as an element in the whole, we can only enrich and deepen our appreciation of it . . . "[62] It can enhance the poem's meaning for "it enables us to join Beowulf with the Christian Middle Ages in a way not hitherto possible."[63] A cautious article, well documented and reasoned, it supports the idea that Beowulf is not just a work of art, it is a Christian work of art with a place in the world of Christian culture.

A third interesting 1951 article was Robertson's "The Doctrine of Charity in Medieval Literary Gardens: A Topical Approach through Symbolism and Allegory."[64] After an excessively long defense, in part one, of the position that medieval gardens: rocks, trees, ponds, flowers, etc. represent Christian allegorical symbols, Robertson concludes in part two that "the trees, the rock, and the pool all point strongly to the theory that what the poet [the Beowulf poet] had in mind was the evil garden of the Scriptures."[65] An attempt to further Christianize the poem, a trend in the critical arena, this article lacks the logical support, or

the plain significance of Bloomfield's article. It contributes, but it is one of the many articles of which the question can be asked: "What does it contribute other than quantity to the criticism of the poem?" Any answer seems lost in the constantly rising tide of publication.

Frustration is not the only reward offered the person who plods through the criticism, sometimes a jewel is uncovered. Such a work is Dorothy Whitelock's book, The Audience of Beowulf,[66] which was published in 1951. She commences by arguing in chapter one that it is unwise to assume as axiomatic, critical positions that are, at best, assumptions. To support this, she analyzes the criticism dealing with dating of the manuscript and concludes that the period generally held to be the date (675-725) is not necessarily so. Here she differs from the critical opinion generally held for the past thirty years. In calling the monsters and dragons the basic essentials of the plot, Tolkien's assumption, she commences chapter two. She discusses the possible sources for them which were, or could have been, familiar to an English audience. She concludes that "one cannot state with confidence that the audience knew the main plot of the poem beforehand; but neither can one state that it did not, for a poet might well be expected to tell his main story fully and clearly; however vague he might be allowed to be about an illustrative parallel."[67]

Having thus offered support for Tolkien's illustrative position, she discusses, in chapter three, the possible origin of the poem. She suggests that "it would be unsafe to argue that any part of England was, in the Eighth Century, insufficiently advanced in intellectual attainments for a sophisticated poem like Beowulf to have been composed there and appreciated."[68] She suggests that, except for burial practice--which can be explained by lone memory (and she uses a good deal of lively skill to defend length of memory)--all the information and ideas in Beowulf would have been familiar to an eighth-century English audience. She disagrees with Girvan on the timing of the dating of the poem. She declares that "the decline (in Northumbria) was not so marked and so continuous as to make the later production of a great poem impossible, or even unlikely."[69] She thinks decline a poor means of trying to date a poem, saying she is "sceptical about attempts to date the poem from its general tone, and to attribute it to a period of greatness or else of decline."[70] Having argued skilfully that the poem might have been written in the late Eighth Century, perhaps in Mercia, she takes a moment to comment upon the purpose of the poet who is contrasting between "noble, disinterested deeds for the good of the human race and actions of violence and treachery."[71] She talks about Beowulf's place in the Onela affair as a sign of the problem of being associated with treachery. She might possibly have been indebted

to Bonjour's book for some suggestions about this.

Whitelock's book is invaluable , for while like Hulbert's article, it has as a guiding theme the problem of accepting hypothetical statements as doctrine, it limits itself to one problem, the date of the poem, and develops the argument with great skill, insight, and humor. Not part of the general trend of treating the poem as a work of art, rather, it deals with an older problem, the history of the original version, and it does so quite well.

In 1952, Lumiansky's article, "The Dramatic Audience in Beowulf,"[72] suggests by contrast just how effective Whitelock's work is. Lumiansky's article also treats the audience of the poem, but it lacks the skillful writing evident in the former work, which makes reading it both educational and entertaining. Lumiansky maintains that the reader's interest in the event is heightened because he experiences Beowulf's action in large part through the dramatic audience, whose very safety depends upon the outcome, of which they have no previous knowledge. In other words, "The poet establishes suspense in spite of anticipatory comment."[73] This position, which does not deny Bonjour's work on the use of anticipation in the poem, simply points out that an audience is present for each of the three fights. Having documented with examples of each audience for each fight, Lumiansky has a strong argument for additional evidence of the artistry of the poet.

Another 1959 article of significant interest is the only one that openly attack the position of Tolkien's famous 1936 statement on the poem. Gang's "Approaches to Beowulf,"[74] starts with a lengthy summary of Tolkien's position; then Gang asserts that the dragon is not more important as a symbol than is a man (like Grendel). He next asserts that the poem is probably two poems, not one unified whole as Tolkien argues. He then says that Ker has a literary point of view (abstract, like a touchstone theory), while Tolkien seems to have none; that the latter is neither historical nor non-historical in his literary position toward the poem. He then concludes his unsupported ramble with a reference to The Audience of Beowulf as he comments on the difficulty of literary criticism of Anglo-Saxon poetry because so little is known of Anglo-Saxon attitudes. A determined doom-Speaker, Gang represents, with the exception of the reopening of the problem of the two poems of Beowulf, which Magoun would later develop with style, no positive statement; he argues that nothing can seemingly be known, that a literary perspective which includes historical analysis must be the only valid approach to literary criticism. Such articles serve little use, except to make one wonder how they came to be published.

In 1953 Arthur Brodeur published an article, "The Structure and Unity of Beowulf," which contained many of the seeds for his monumental study of The Art of Beowulf.[75]

In the article, Brodeur begins by praising Tolkien as the most correct interpreter of the poem. Brodeur supports the unity of the two parts. They are cemented by the sub-plot in the relationship of Hygelac and Beowulf. Hygelac's death is described four times, Brodeur points out. Each time it relates a stage in the dissolution of Geat power. This, as Bonjour had argued, relates the parts of the poem. Brodeur continues by arguing that Beowulf is always loyal to Hygelac--first as a thane, then in memory of him when a king. This argument about the sub-plot incorporates some of the best ideas earlier suggested about the unity of the poem. Provocative, thoughtful, it helps the reader to understand more clearly the ability of the man whose book on the artistry of the poem would become such an outstanding critical monument.

Another 1953 article of major importance was Francis Magoun's "The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry."[76] Applying Parry's and Lord's ideas of oral formulas to Anglo-Saxon, the author discusses several poems. He analyzes several passages from Beowulf, especially the first twenty-five verses, to defend the position that the poem employs a highly significant number of formulas and formula patterns. These, he says, indicate that the old oral formulas were adapted to Christian texts. He closes by suggesting that these changes might often affect apparent textual problems. Not considered in this area

before this article, the oral formulaic theory was to become perhaps the most fashionable analysis of Old English in the ensuing fifteen years. Beowulf, of course, would frequently be used as the corpus. Magoun's article was the first probe of the poem for possible formulas which would, through textual analysis, explain the old mysteries.

A third monumental 1953 publication was the first edition of C.L. Wrenn's Beowulf: with the Finnesburg Fragment.[77] He says the purpose of the text is two-fold: "to present Beowulf in its proper setting as a great poem to university students, and to make available in a readable and manageable form the more significant results of recent scholarship."[78] This edition, then, is the first which operates under the modern principle of considering the poem as a poem. For any study of literature, this is certainly a sign of significant change in critical approach. His preface includes statements incorporating the fruit of recent criticism. He treats the manuscript in part one, relating its history, stressing manuscript studies, and commenting on the possibility that there may have been several copies of the manuscript in the Eighth Century. The last is an interesting, if speculative consideration.

In part two, he comments upon the title of the poem, stating that Kemble first originated the title, Beowulf, in 1833 and that it was generally accepted by the time of Grein in 1857. The commentary on Blackburn's approach to

the poem in 1897 might render this assertion somewhat uncertain. Even at the turn of the century, disagreement on the title continued.

In part three, Wrenn speaks of the textual pre-history and its place in discussions of the text. He comments on the nature of the Anglo-Saxon language in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries, stressing the characteristics which the several dialects share. He discusses the existence of a 'koine' or common language, the cultural influences of the period upon literature, and concludes:

> the tentative conclusion of all the foregoing would seem to be roughly as follows. There was probably a written text of Beowulf by the middle of the eighth century, most likely in the Northumbrian dialect, but possibly in some kind of Mercian of the west. This was turned into Alfredian West Saxon at the close of the ninth century; and some few of the Alfredian forms have remained amid the later adjustment of the language to the Classical koine of the age of Aelfric. At some time after the middle of the ninth century a Kentish or Kentish influenced scribe had a hand in copying at least part of the text; but this cannot have happened earlier than the later ninth century because the typical unrounding and lowering of Old English 'y' to 'e' did not take place before that time in south-east England. If the poem was not originally Northumbrian, then at some time a Northumbrian copyist must have worked on the text and left just a few traces in the final literary West-Saxon copy. The poem was for certain originally Anglian; but we cannot determine whether most of the Anglian forms surviving in the MS. are relics of the original dialect, or due to intermediate copying, or to the fact that most scribes of the classical Anglo-Saxon koine of the tenth and eleventh centuries had some west-Midlands connections.[79]

Here, in concise form, is a statement of the origin of the poem, including the latest of critical theory on the matter. Wrenn next discusses the editors of Beowulf; He concludes that Klaeber's edition and Chambers' edition

of Wyatt are the two best by English speakers, that with von Schaubert's re-edition they form the best--and most conservative--trend in editions. Holthausen and Trautmann are mentioned as speculative editors. Hoops is recommended for his helpful commentary upon the poem. Wrenn declares at this point that his edition of the poem chiefly follows von Schaubert.

Part four deals with the matters of the date and place of origin. Wrenn reviews the critical opinions on the matter of date and states: "we must conclude, then, that Beowulf was composed at some time between the close of the seventh century and a point in the early ninth century or thereabouts when Cynewulf and his group were at work. Further, that within these limits there is some probability in favor of a date between the early eighth century and its middle, in the ground of the much discussed phrase 'wundini gold'."[80] Wrenn then recognizes the work of Whitelock and says that her position must make his less than certain. On the matter of place of origin, he sums up his position by placing the origin in Anglia, either in Northumbria or Mercia in the eighth century.

In part five, Wrenn deals with the subject matter of the poem. He discusses the general nature of the poem as a tragic poem, comments upon the history in the poem--with summaries of all the people who have always appeared in all the historical discussions--and speaks of the heroic legend,

the folklore, and the other sources, suggesting that the poem is a "profound and universal elegy."[81] Part six speaks of the structure of the poem. Wrenn says it is a kind of narrative poem which entertains the reader by presenting the rise and fall of a great man. He then discusses some possible interpolations, which he considers not genuine and rejects, before he concludes with a statement of agreement with Bonjour's work on the unity of the digressions. Here ends the best synthesis of criticism on the poem since the Chambers and Klaeber texts of the thirties. It incorporates the best critical ideas of the intervening twenty years and, alongside Brodeur's book, best represents the cumulative fruits of the age of aesthetic appreciation of Beowulf.

The last part deals with verse-techniques. Wrenn mentions Pope and then cites the eleven characteristics of the metre of the poem, comments upon the diction of the poem, and ends by saying that the poem is in the Germanic heroic style. An excellent introduction to an excellent edition, Wrenn's contribution in 1953 is probably the last of the good pre-Variorum editions of the poem.

Two 1955 articles illustrate two of the modish trends in criticism during the mid-fifties. One deals again with the matter of the Christian elements in the poem and employs the relationship of the Christian elements to allegorical inferences after the manner suggested by Bloomfield.

Here, in "Beowulf and the Liturgy," Cabaniss argues that the liturgical elements are allegorically evoked, as in the account of Beowulf's encounter with Grendel's mother.[82] This article, as well as others which involved an allegorical approach, were employing a technique not unlike the archtypal criticism modish at the time. The difficulty with the approach is much the same as that of the old mythological one. As Lawrence observed, and the observation would apply to one approach as well as to the other, any story can be made to fit just about any approach which the explicator chooses. This severely limits the significant appeal of allegorical interpretation. But it does not prevent its use.

An article treating the unity of the structure of the poem in 1955 is Rogers' "Beowulf's Three Great Fights."[83] In this good but somewhat testy article, Rogers argues that a consistent pattern emerges in the three fights. However, it is far from evident, he argues, that the poem is one work, which is the unified single effort of one author. He cites, for example, Beowulf's return as the possible work of another man. In order to defend his position, the author openly takes exception with the ideas of Tolkien's article--and indirectly with the ideas of others--on several points. This represents an open break with the critical trend toward identifying the unifying elements of structure and style. It is an approach which Magoun would pick up in an article arguing for the existence of two

poems by two different men. Rogers continues his argument by positing the idea that the transition of the third part of the poem is clumsily handled--as is much of the poem. He does contend, however, that the handling of the motives of weapons, treasures, and society is consistent throughout. The suggestion is that there is some kind of competent unifying element in the poem. This unity is only superficial; however, Rogers' argument for the authorship must be considered doubtful. It may be, he concludes, just a compilation of several authors. Concluding a reading of this article would produce in some a sigh of hopelessness. The position defended is in many ways the same as that proposed over a hundred years ago, argued out, and eventually generally rejected. The return to the theory of multiple lays and multiple authorship may simply prove the axiom that critical theories repeat themselves in varying but consistent cycles; it certainly doesn't purport to prove much about the poem--reopening old Pandoric boxes might not always be the best way to find a breath of fresh critical air.

Interest in the archaeological elements in the poem received fresh emphasis in 1957 with the publication of an article by Cramp on "Beowulf and Archaeology."[84] In this long article, divided into sections on helmets, swords, and houses, the author discusses possible applications of current archaeological findings to help elucidate certain

passages in Beowulf, and, especially, to help visualize Heorot. The article does provide some insights into the word-horde of the poem; it also illustrates the continued effort to bring new information to the study of the poem. How much analysis of the poem as a poem it provides is a matter which, unfortunately, must remain unanswered.

The same might be said for an article by Hatto entitled "Snake-swords and Boar Helms in Beowulf."[85] It illustrates the caution one must take in reading the critics, however, for while it might be just an article on archaeological findings, it is not. Rather Hatto defends the position that the snake was a magical sign of aggression and the boar a magical sign of defense. He further argues that these animals denote symbolic battle values which exist throughout the poem. For the reader interested in symbolism, especially in Jungian symbols, the article suggests some interesting approaches for possible further literary analysis.

Another psychological approach which appeared in the same year was Wright's "Good and Evil; Light and Darkness; Joy and Sorrow in Beowulf."[86] In it numerous examples are drawn from the poem to demonstrate the increased presence of darkness and of sorrow as the poem progresses from part one to the end of part two. The suggestion is implicitly made that it moves, thus, from good to evil. The article supports a position of loose unity in Beowulf, because the critic is unwilling to acknowledge openly the theory

of a single conscious artist for the poem. The article really consists mainly of quotations showing the Light-Dark, and Joy-Sorrow contrasts in the poem. This in itself might be of value to establish the ability of the poet to use psychological imagery to help control the mood. Why the critic is, therefore, unwilling to support a position of tight unity of structure by one poet is rather curious.

In 1957, two other articles of unusual interest were published. One was "The Dragon in Beowulf" by Arthur DuBois.[87] He commences by establishing five categories through which "an exclusively perceptual thing can acquire meanings." That is, five ways in which something perceived can be conceptualized. They are to be arbitrarily assigned a meaning; to be defined by the author in essay; to be given meaning from common associations; to declare its own meaning; and to acquire meaning from context. Of the five, DuBois contends that the Dragon takes its meaning chiefly from the political references which surround its story; that is, it takes its meaning from context, for it is a symbol of internal political weakness. The rather bizarre, Gestaltish approach is interesting, on its own strange grounds; it is more interesting for the further possibilities for analysis within the framework of arbitrary schemata suggested by the very idea of the five categories

A no less interesting, but more insightful, article is one which deals not only with Beowulf but with Old English

poetic criticism in general. It is Stanley Greenfield's "The Canons of Old English Criticism."[88] The article is difficult to understand because of seemingly loose logic and flashing transitions; it argues that the formulaic concepts so modish in current criticism are not sufficiently definitive of Anglo-Saxon poetry to necessitate an analysis only in their terms. Other traditional modes of analysis are still applicable, it argues. The article is sound in its theories, even if it is a bit difficult to follow. Perhaps the greatest good it provides is to identify the two major trends in Beowulf criticism, oral-formula analysis and applications of Christian allegories. In as much as these were and still are two of the trends the article provides a basis for looking at the place of subsequent criticism of the poem.

Two interesting but very different critical works appeared in 1958 other than the basically unchanged re-edition of Wrenn's text of the poem. The first of these was Bliss' book which purported to say something of the verse-techniques. It was The Metre of Beowulf.[89] In Chapter One, some general rules are established for "the usefulness of any classification depends entirely on the validity of the underlying assumptions."[90] In the next chapter, the argument is made that the verses must be studied in 'light', 'normal', and 'heavy' or one, two, or three stress terms. Here the possibility is proposed that "it is possible that

the presence or absence of stress is dictated by circumstances that escape our untrained ears but were immediately obvious to the ear of the Anglo-Saxon."[91] The possible futility of this position seems to escape the author. He proceeds to classify nine kinds of verses which depend upon his special approach--the importance of the finite verb. It, he claims, is the hitherto unnoticed key to the metre. The vagaries of even this position appear in his dictum that "alliteration is always to be accepted as evidence that the finite verb is stressed, except when it is followed by one or more particles in the same clause; in this case it is only stressed if the metre absolutely requires it."[92] The apparent difference between absolute and grammatical relativity seems to be overlooked. He continues in subsequent chapters to discuss "resolution," the importance of the caesura to metrics; Sievers' five types--which he thinks adequate--to his system, and general matters in a chapter entitled "Remainders."

While virtually ignoring the extremely important work of Pope, he declares that "any new classification, then, must incorporate as much as possible of Sievers' system, while eliminating its errors." The most important error he thinks is the manner in which Sievers overlooked the position of the caesura. He concludes in the final chapter that other attempts incorporate the "current interpretation of modern English verse [which] is that it is

chronometric:[here Pope might be mentioned but is not] that is, that its stresses recur at equal intervals irrespective of the amount of speech-material that separates them."[93] He argues in closing that recent attempts to apply this, but assuming the fundamental structure of Old English to be the same as Modern English is invalid. He insists that metric analysis must be used. Perhaps his theory would receive more attention if it were not for the matter of his style. Scholars make mistakes, but they do not like to be lectured to by superior beings. Not since Kock had a critic taken such a superior attitude to his colleagues as Bliss does. This alone would more than jeopardize his work; it would virtually guarantee that it would be ignored. It has been.

A long and critically significant 1958 article was R.E. Kaske's "Sapientia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf."[94] Part of the trend in Christian allegory, it has been frequently mentioned in the ten years since it appeared, often by the author himself. It begins with the position that the Beowulf poet was familiar with both Christian and Germanic traditions of Sapientia and Fortitudo. He chose to use those from each tradition that fitted best with the other tradition.

In part two, he says that the first part of the poem includes five pairings of Sapientia and Fortitudo: following each fight, during the subsequent feast--and at Hygelac's on return. These seem to help structure the poem. The

coast-warden and Unferth suggest lack of the balance of Sapientia and Fortitudo in Beowulf, a claim which he quickly disputes. The concluding argument of this part is that Beowulf is a balance of the two. Part three argues that Hrothgar suffers from a loss of Fortitudo as he has grown old which means that his use of the other force is unbalanced because of the failure to balance with the other. This lack of balance is evident also in the Danish nation. Examples which the critic uses include the witan's lack of judgment at the mere and lack of preparation for the dam's attack.

In part four, Kaske argues that as Hrothgar is unbalanced towards Sapientia, Grendel is unbalanced because he represents only Fortitudo (and thus malitia). This can only be overcome by great Fortitudo; it cannot be conquered by Sapientia alone. Thus, Beowulf, and not the Danes, must fight the monster. In part five he says that as Hrothgar and the Danes err in excess of Sapientia, so Hygelac and the Geats err in excess of Fortitudo over several generations. In the next part the critic suggests that in part II, Beowulf has changed from hero to hero-king, with a change in the Sapientia-Fortitudo obligations. He serves well, and, in fighting the dragon, fights and destroys his own potential malitia (excess pagan sapientia) and his people's (loss of sapientia and fortitudo as well). Wiglaf is the young Beowulf type of hero who stands beside the hero-king as Beowulf dies well on his endedæg. This interpretation of the

fate of the Geats is one weakness of the theory, for it implies that they are somehow cured rather than doomed as the story implies. The over-all argument is strong, and deserves analysis, even the concluding extrapolation that above the mutable Sapientia and Fortitudo of men "there towers the Sapientia et Fortitudo of God, perfect, unchanging, everlasting. In that contrast lies, at its deepest and most inclusive, the tragedy of Beowulf."[95] Whether this means more than that Beowulf is a man, and that in itself is tragedy enough might require a bit more analysis on the part of the critic. It is interesting to note how the article includes the ideas of the pagan Germanic people as partially controlling elements in the story. It would seem that the trend toward greater harmony between the pagans and the Christian in Beowulf criticism is becoming evident.

As in several previous years of the fifties, 1959 was the year of publication of several significant works. One of these, on the more general subject of the period, was Robert Creed's article, "The Making of an Anglo-Saxon Poem."[96] He begins by arguing that "in the formulaic or traditional poem, we are frequently able, because of this schematization of the diction, not only to examine the formula which the singer chose, but also to guess at with some assurance, and to examine, the system or entire group of formulas from which he chose at a given point in his poem."[97] This is a rather startling claim but in part two he begins a support of his

position by examining the formulas in one four line portion of the poem beginning at line 356 which he selected at random. In part three, the author offers his version of the four lines; he claim s "that the simple use of formulaic diction is no guarantee of aesthetic success. Conversely, the use of a formulaic diction does not make such success impossible. Beowulf, with its highly schematized diction yet continually marvelous subtlety, is sufficient proof to the contrary."[98] The suggestion of a phrase hoard was not new; the application of the theory to a segment of Beowulf was. It would lead in coming years to a closer examination of the poem for the purpose of finding formulas; this treasure hunt is apt to continue for at least another decade, replacing in part the fondness for close anglysis of a single word to find its exact linguistic significance.

Another article of 1959 was Kaske's "The Sigemund-Heremod and Hama-Hygelac Passages in Beowulf."[99] which hearkens back to his earlier works, for he suggests that these two episodes, coming before and after the Finn episode, demonstrate the heroic ideal of Sapientia et Fortitudo which lies at the heart of Beowulf. Each pair furthermore demonstrates, he argues, the bad (Heremod-Hygelac) paired with the good (Sigemund-Hama) ideal. This theory of Kaske's would reappear in the guise of a rampant hobby horse in the sixties.

C.L. Wrenn made two important contributions to the study of Beowulf during 1959, for he published an article

on archaeological findings and the poem, and he wrote a supplement for another edition of that famous work by Chambers, Beowulf:An Introduction.[100] In the article, Wrenn says the similarity of physical description in the poem and the artifacts found at Sutton Hoo suggest that Sutton Hoo was a public, pagan-like burial ceremony for a Christian king, whose body was buried privately. This public burial might have been, he suggests, a source of inspiration for the author of Beowulf, who perhaps, was alive at the time. This interesting article suggests but does not develop a possible artistic approach to the poem by suggesting the alternatives available from sources, and the ones which the poet chose to use.

A better approach is, perhaps, Hatto's. In his supplement to the new edition of Chambers' work, Wrenn states the aim of the supplement "is to bring together as briefly as possible all the more significant facts, theories and ideas concerned with Beowulf which have become known during the quarter of a century which has elapsed since the publication of 'Recent Work on Beowulf to 1930', which formed the concluding part V of the second edition of 1932."[101] Wrenn further states that his secondary aim is to bring the bibliography up to date, using Chambers' choices of subject matter as the basis for both goals. He then moves to Chapter One, which treats of Sutton Hoo and Beowulf. Here, he claims that the discovery of the ship is of paramount importance to

Beowulf scholars. He says of it: "By far the greatest single event in Beowulf studies in the period under review was the excavating of the East Anglian king's ship-cenotaph with its treasures almost intact in the summer of 1939."[102] While that discovery is certainly important, strong arguments could be presented that other events, for instance, the publication of Tolkien's article in 1936 which stimulated the rise of studies of the poem as a literary work and not an historical one, were of greater importance. This is especially true when the subsequent influence of the two events, as measured by the frequency with which they are referred to is considered. Sutton Hoo might not be of paramount importance regardless of the important ideas it has generated. Wrenn, in this section, gives a lengthy summary of the discovery of Sutton Hoo, comments upon the curious fact that the first important article on it, Lindqvist's, did not appear for ten years after the find, and then discusses the mingling of pagan and Christian influences in the find, further evidence of the conglomerate in the culture which produced Beowulf. Wrenn speaks of the possibility that the find might shed new light on the dating of the poem and cites Whitelock's studies to show that the matter is by no means a closed question; in spite of this possibility, he does revert to Dobbie's statement to conclude: "The problems of the date and place of writing Beowulf are, therefore, still unsettled, in spite of the erudition which has been

brought to bear upon them during the last half-century."[103] The remainder of this chapter is then devoted to selected passages from Beowulf which might be clarified by the findings at Sutton Hoo.

In Chapter Two, Wrenn deals with the manuscript and the interpretation of the text. He says "the great event in the primary study of the text of Beowulf since the second edition of the Introduction was the publication of Professor Kemp Malone's The Thorkelin Transcripts of Beowulf in Facsimile in 1951."[104] He submits that as a result of it a new epoch in Beowulf textual criticism may have opened up. At this point he provides a summary of scholarship on the manuscript in the previous twenty years and moves to a discussion of the six editions of the poem which had appeared since 1930. After commenting very briefly upon each of them, Wrenn gives a word of praise to Hoops for his two great works as he closes the chapter.

Chapter Three, which speaks of genesis, date, and structure, starts with a discussion of work on the genesis of the poem. Wrenn notes that "the general effect of recent work has been to widen the scope of hypothesis concerning the genesis of Beowulf."[105] The chief instrument in this he sees as Whitelock's book which has successfully questioned the certainty of previous opinions concerning the date of the poem. He does defend the by now tradition view, however, for he closes the discussion by saying that "it cannot be

said that the 'orthodox' view, though it has been seriously called in question, has been displaced."[106] His position of general conservatism continues in the next section which is simply a running commentary on the dating of the poem with emphasis placed upon the views of Girvan, Sisam, and Whitelock. In the third section on the structure of the poem, he talks of the importance of Tolkien's position, mentions Gang's lively attempt to undermine Tolkien, and finished with a commentary upon Bonjour's work which includes another praiseworthy note for Tolkien.

In Chapter Four on the "Historical and Legendary Matters," he begins with a short section on new documents of which he finds a new edition of Saxo Grammaticus to be the most interesting. He discusses next the problem of Offa and his Queen, commenting that this is the digression for which Bonjour offers the least convincing argument. He next discusses the Fight at Finnsburg, mentioning Girvan's position in 1940 with which Malone agreed; then he comments upon Brodeur's challenge to this position. The last short section of the chapter is on folklore and talks of Carney's work on Irish folklore influences on the poem. All in all, the supplement lacks the dignity and depth characteristic of Chambers' earlier work. This is certainly necessitated by the abbreviated length, for this supplement is only some forty pages long. Still, one might have wished that, if he were going to the trouble to comment upon scholarship over

the previous twenty years, that Wrenn would have done the more thorough job, which one would expect of a man of his ability.

Another 1959 publication of note was the second edition of the facsimile of the Beowulf manuscript with transliteration and notes by Julius Zupitza. Originally published in 1882, this second edition contained a new reproduction of the manuscript and an introductory note by Norman Davis.[107] The comments of interest in Davis' note include a discussion of the new photographic techniques which were applied to the manuscript with the intention of producing a better reproduction. As a result of this and independent textual analysis and commentary, Pope and Ker are named as two sources, some corrections of Zupitza's original notes are offered. Beyond this, there is nothing new in the edition, with the exception, of course, of the new photographs which scholars might consider of interest, although little change in the text has been suggested as a result.

One other book in 1959 must be considered in any study of critical works which have influenced the progress of Beowulf criticism. It is a book which in many ways is the culmination of the trend toward the analysis of the poem as a work of art, which had been gaining momentum for the past thirty-five years. It is Arthur Brodeur's outstanding analysis on the structural and stylistic unity and beauty of the poem, The Art of Beowulf.[108]

In eight chapters and three appendices, Arthur Brodeur defends the thesis with which he begins: "Beowulf is the work of a great artist, a work carefully planned and organized, excellent in form and structure, and composed with a sense of style unique in the poet's age. It would appear that I regard the work as composed in writing, and the author as trained in the art of the scop and educated as a clerk. In him the best of pagan antiquity and of the Christian culture of his time had fused; and we have in his work an achievement unequaled in English poetry before Chaucer." Once he states his position, Brodeur begins with a discussion of the diction of the poem in Chapter One. In it, he starts with comments from Klaeber and Lawrence, these speak of the artistic beauty of the poem. He then talks of Magoun's more recent argument for the oral rather than the written origin of the poem. Brodeur disagrees, urging that "the language of Beowulf at almost all points, indicates that its author had been trained as a professional scop; and it is most unlikely that a man so trained should ever lose the ability to express himself in the conventional mode of the traditional poetry under the influence of a Christian education."[109]

He then refers to Lawrence, who also agrees with Brodeur that Beowulf was composed, pen in hand or written at the poet's dictation. Brodeur thinks this composition marked by identifying marks of diction. Thus, the body of the chapter is introduced; it consists of lengthy and elaborate examples

of artistic use of diction which indicate deliberate choice and composition. One mark of this deliberation is in its differences: "It differs from heroic lay and econium in its greater length, in its variety, in the frequency and spaciousness of dialogue and monologue, and in its almost dramatic emphasis on the emotions of its personages."[110]

These differences are most marked in the use of compounds, base words, and spontaneous imagery, says Brodeur. To support this contention, he analyzed, for example, the scene of Grendel's dam's mere. Here the deliberateness becomes quite evident, he contends: "The nouns and adjectives are carefully selected not so much to portray the particular landscape as to suggest vividly and powerfully, the peril and horror to which the hero and his companions must expose themselves to reach the fearful lair of the troll."[111] Examples of deliberate effort by the poet to achieve richness of expression for the purpose of developing the emotional appeal of the characters is evident here. Stressing for several pages the enormous compound usage, Brodeur summarizes:

> We may readily concede that many compounds in any poem are stereotyped. But it is surely significant that the majority of compounds in Beowulf are peculiar to this poem, and that a very great number of them are words which convey thought or feeling more freely and vividly than the flower of other Anglo-Saxon poets of the past. They are, moreover, often used in telling combinations, in which the various elements of the sentence combine, into a style more vigorous, stately, and beautiful than that of any other Old English poem.[112]

In Chapter Two, a second major technical mark of the poet's distinctive use of his art is discussed--variation.

Commenting on other definitions of the term, Brodeur offers his own: "A double or multiple statement of the same concept or idea in different words, with a more or less perceptible shift in stress: one member of the variation may state the thought either more generally or more specifically than the other; or the second member while restating essentially the same concept or idea, may do so in a manner which emphasizes a somewhat different aspect of it."[113] Using a number of examples to illustrate his definition, Brodeur proceeds to comment upon the poet's effective use of the development of the emotional appeal in the hero. He speaks highly of the poet's use of variation: "Variation is but one of the devices through which this effect is produced and sustained, but it is the variations which lie at its center. The centrality, the focusing power, the variations, these become more apparent as the narrative advances. And it is in the use of variation that the superiority of the poet of Beowulf over all others of his age is most manifest: in other Old English poems, the device is too often conventional flat, and trite; in Beowulf it is an instrument of power and beauty."[114]

The poet's use of variation is examined further from the point of view of technical use; the conclusion reached is that

> our poet is given to comparatively heavy use of variation in passages charged with emotion; sometimes, indeed, in such context, variation is reinforced by words and

> phrases which, not structurally members of the variations, yet attach themselves closely to the variational members and load them so strongly as to become, in effect, part of them. The emotion thus communicated may dominate a long narrative passage; it may provide a point of departure for a new train of consequent action.[115]

The consequences of the use of variation are three says Brodeur. The first is an increasingly developing awareness in the listener of the tragic situation, the second is a deepening perception of the universality of its meaning; and the third is an appreciation of the continuous texture in the dramatic narrative.

Perhaps the most important example of the use of variation is in the episode dealing with Unferth. It is important, for Brodeur thinks the clash of Beowulf and Unferth is the mechanism which triggers all of the ensuing action of part one. Another use of variation for the development of emotional revelation is discussed. It deals with the Grendel episode: "In this narrative of the first of Beowulf's three great adventures, the stages of the struggle, in a desperate nature, are communicated not so much by direct statement of the action as through the revelation of emotions."[116] After commenting on the smaller number of scenes which limit the use of variation in part two, Brodeur concludes that in part two there is considerably less variation than in part one because the action of part two is concentrated in time and place, there being the two scenes, that of Beowulf's last combat and death.

The first two chapters, those that dealt with the poet's deliberate use of poetic technique, concluded, Brodeur moves, in Chapter Three, to the structure and unity of the poem, a matter he spoke of in an article six years earlier. Here he follows Tolkien quite closely. Brodeur thinks Klaeber right that the poem is broken backed only if the main action is analyzed. A closer analysis shows, as Tolkien suggested, that the poet deliberately chose to contrast the season of youth and the season of decline; thus the difficult choice of breaking the poem into two parts was, Brodeur argues, a deliberate one on the part of the poet.

Chapter Four, "Design for Terror," is really a continuation of the previous chapter. Here, after talking of Klaeber's idea of the unification of the three fights, Brodeur thinks Klaeber wrong about the action. He thinks each of the fights more terrible for Beowulf than the previous one; thus, the poem moves progressively to greater and greater terror. It concludes with the terror of the dragon: "This monster is a much more deadly antagonist than Grendel or Grendel's dam; it is so formidable in its threefold armament of teeth, venom, and fire; so ruthless in its determined advance and in the mechanics of its attacks, that death is the inevitable consequence of combat with it. It is more terrible, but less horrible."[117]

In talking of setting and action in Chapter Five, Brodeur contends that whatever the original sources of the poem,

they had become in the poem the work of one poet. He thinks little of the idea of more than one author, a favorite idea of Magoun: "Attempts to prove plural authorship, or to show that individual passages are interpolations, have shipwrecked on the total cohesiveness of the poem."[118]

The importance of setting comes in the poet's use of contrast; he calls it the essence of the tragedy of Beowulf. This contrast appears most clearly in the contrast of glory and starkness as Beowulf's funeral is described. Like the other techniques, the use of contrast demonstrates the poet's skill in his art.

Chapter Six is of little interest to those familiar with Bonjour's work on the episodes and digressions, for it follows his ideas on the artistic placement of these parts in relation to the main story almost without exception. Brodeur does analyze the Unferth episode in some detail, with no unusual insights. His brilliance really becomes apparent in the section in which he analyzes Malone on the Ingeld episode. Presenting a number of Malone's arguments (at one point six of seven paragraphs begin with Malone's name), Brodeur attacks him on his interpretations of the text, on the ethical code of the Danes, and of the Germanic peoples, on Malone's use of the artistry of the poem for interpretating purposes (Brodeur thinks his use is contradictory to the effects of artistry in the poem), and pays him questional honor by comparing him with Kock in the

common emmendatory error. All in all, Malone's is one of the most interesting, and enigmatic digressions connected with Beowulf.

Other critics also draw fire from Brodeur. Speaking of the Christian and pagan elements in the poem in Chapter Six, he assumes a position that a series of pagan lays were made into one poem by a Christian. At this point, he disagrees with Tolkien on the paganism of Beowulf. Brodeur, as a matter of fact, concludes a long and rather unrewarding analysis of the Christian elements in the poem by commenting that Beowulf is the only Christian in the poem. The discussion is interesting; it is unconvincing, however, to the student familiar with the Christian-pagan controvery and especially with Tolkien's position on it.

The last chapter treats with anticipation, contrast, and irony. It begins with a summary of previous chapters, showing their place in the Old English poetic tradition. He chooses to disagree with Bonjour on the use of anticipation. Harkening back to a previous chapter, he thinks Christian influences, and not fate, are the controlling element in what Bonjour calls type two anticipation. He closes the chapter with a discussion of contrast and dramatic irony as elements which enhance the tragedy of Beowulf. He sees the tragedy as that in which "in all that human strength, courage, and wisdom may achieve he is victorious; but against God's foreknowledge neither human life

nor human wisdom may prevail."[119] With this the text ends; only the appendices on poetic appelation, checklist of compounds, and limits on variations remain.

Thus is concluded a study, which, aside from some questionable positions on the Christian elements in the poem, incorporates the scholarship of the previous thirty years to establish with extraordinary skill the major development of that period--the artistry of the poet in writing his poem. With Brodeur's book an era really ended. The criticism would, of course, go on.

CHAPTER III

NOTES

[1] Neophilologus, XXVI (1941), no. 1, 24-27; no 2, 27-33; no. 3, 213-228.

[2] Timmer, p. 224.

[3] Timmer, p. 228.

[4] Neophilologus, XXIX (1944), 180-185.

[5] Timmer, "Heathen and Christian Elements in Old English Poetry," p. 185.

[6] (New Haven, 1942).

[7] Pope, pp. ix-xxxiv.

[8] Pope, p. 3.

[9] Pope, p. 3.

[10] Pope, p. 6.

[11] Pope, pp. 6.

[12] Pope, pp. 6-7.

[13] Pope, p. 19.

[14] Pope, pp. 20-21.

[15] Pope, pp. 21-22.

[16] Pope, p. 22.

[17] Pope, p. 22.

[18] Pope, pp. 78-79.

[19] (Berkeley, 1946).

[20] James R. Hulbert, MP, XLIV (1946), 65-75.

[21] Hulbert, p. 74.

[22] Richard Wilbur, "Beowulf," In Ceremony and Other Poems (New York, 1948), pp. 36-37.

[23] English Studies, XXIX (1948), 161-172.

[24] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1948), pp. 36-37.

[25] Hamilton, p. 108.

[26] Hamilton, p. 108.

[27] Hamilton, pp. 120-121.

[28] Hamilton, p. 126.

[29] Hamilton, p. 129.

[30] Hamilton, p. 130.

[31] Hamilton, p. 108.

[32] Henry Bosley Woolf, "Unferth," MLQ, X (1949), 145-152.

[33] JEGP, XLVIII (1949), 116-126.

[34] Lumiansky, p. 126.

[35] (Oxford, 1950).

[36] Bonjour, p. xiv.

[37] Bonjour, p. xv.

[38] Bonjour, p. 4.

[39] Bonjour, p. 5.

[40] Bonjour, p. 6.

[41] Bonjour, p. 8.

[42] Bonjour, p. 9.

[43] Bonjour, p. 23.

[44] Bonjour, p. 24.

45 Bonjour, p. 27.

46 Bonjour, p. 27.

47 Bonjour, p. 29.

48 Bonjour, p. 32.

49 Bonjour, p. 33.

50 Bonjour, p. 35.

51 Bonjour, p. 38.

52 Bonjour, p. 40.

53 Bonjour, p. 42.

54 Bonjour, p. 45.

55 Bonjour, p. 47.

56 Bonjour, p. 48.

57 Bonjour, p. 63.

58 PMLA, LXVI (1951), 1168-1176.

59 Traditio, VII (1949-1950), 410-415.

60 Bloomfield, p. 158.

61 Bloomfield, p. 160.

62 Bloomfield, p. 161.

63 Bloomfield, p. 164.

64 In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 165-188.

65 Robertson, p. 185.

66 (Oxford, 1951).

67 Whitelock, p. 70.

68 Whitelock, p. 105.

69 Whitelock, p. 102.

70 Whitelock, p. 99.

[71] Whitelock, p. 100.

[72] JEGP, LI (1952), 545-550.

[73] Lumiansky, "The Dramatic Audience in Beowulf," p. 545.

[74] T.M. Gang, "Approaches to Beowulf," RES, III, 9 (January, 1952), pp. 1-12.

[75] PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 1183-1195.

[76] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 189-222.

[77] (London, 1953).

[78] Wrenn, p. 5.

[79] Wrenn, pp. 20-21.

[80] Wrenn, p. 36.

[81] Wrenn, p. 62.

[82] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 223-232.

[83] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 165-188.

[84] Medieval Archaeology, I (1957), 57-77.

[85] English Studies, XXXVIII (1957), 34-36.

[86] In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 257-268.

[87] PMLA, LXXII (1957), 819-822.

[88] ELH, XXXIV, no. 2 (June, 1957), 141-155.

[89] (Oxford, 1958).

[90] Bliss, p. 3.

[91] Bliss, p. 13.

[92] Bliss, p. 20.

[93] Bliss, p. 106.

94 In An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 269-310.

95 Kaske, p. 310.

96 ELH, XXI (1959), 445-454.

97 Creed, p. 445.

98 Creed, p. 452.

99 PMLA, LXXIV (1959), 489-494.

100 "Sutton Hoo and Beowulf," in Melanges de Linguistique et de Philologie (Paris, 1959), 495-507.

101 Wrenn, "Supplement," to Chambers, Beowulf: An Introduction, 3rd ed. p. 507.

102 Wrenn, "Supplement," p. 508.

103 Wrenn, "Supplement," p. 516.

104 Wrenn, "Supplement," p. 524.

105 Wrenn, "Supplement," p. 528.

106 Wrenn, "Supplement," p. 531.

107 Beowulf, transliterator, Julius Zupitza. (London, 1882). Reprinted with notes by Norman Davis (London, 1959).

108 (Berkeley, 1959).

109 Brodeur, p. viii, p. 4.

110 Brodeur, p. 11.

111 Brodeur, p. 26.

112 Brodeur, p. 38.

113 Brodeur, p. 40.

114 Brodeur, p. 44.

115 Brodeur, p. 44.

116 Brodeur, p. 60.

117 Brodeur, p. 102.

[118] Brodeur, p. 109.

[119] Brodeur, p. 144.

CHAPTER IV

1960'S: CONCLUSION

Beowulf criticism follows an evident and comprehensible pattern of historical development. As with any object of analysis, the first period is that of discovery. The work is unknown; then, suddenly it seems, many persons are aware of it, probing into it, seeking to discover what it is. This period for the poem encompasses the period from Thorkelin to about 1880. True, nature-myth criticism was a predominant influence during this period; however even that venerable school of critical thought usually seemed concerned with trying to discover how to classify the poem. It was typical of that period of Beowulf analysis to seek to place each new discovery in an appropriate niche.

Gradually the initial period is displaced by a time when the poem is analyzed to determine what information it provides for a greater understanding of the people who produced it. This period of interest in Beowulf as a sociological and linguistic phenomenon encompasses the time from the late eighties to the mid-thirties. It is the time of Panzer's work on Beowulf as a representative folk tale; it is the time of Stjerna's work on the relationships

between the poem and the Vendal-Kraka archeological finds.[1] Certainly much analysis of the value of the poem preceded this period. The exacting and exhausting linguistic analyses of nineteenth-century German philologists testify to the earlier interest in the socio-linguistic significance of the poem. The bulk of such analysis appeared, however, in the early Twentieth Century.

As exhausting, tedious, and sometimes seemingly irrelevant as the criticism of this second period often is, it proved a necessary preparation for the third phase, recognition of the phenomenon as an individual entity worthy of aesthetic appreciation because of its distinctive, intrinsic features. Although Beowulf criticism, even in its earliest period, is rich with articles which discuss aesthetic considerations, most critics would agree that a distinctive shift in attitude toward the poem occurred in the thirties. This trend, which stimulated critical analysis of the poem as a purely aesthetic phenomenon, is linked with the major texts of Lawrence, Chambers, and Klaeber. The most influential landmark of its beginnings is, of course, Tolkien's article--still the single most important piece of Beowulf criticism, for it clarified the basic tenets for aesthetic analysis.

This third phase has continued to the present. However, an almost symbolic landmark seems to delineate a change in Beowulf criticism. Since the 1959 publication of

Brodeur's text, the most important critical publication in Beowulf criticism since Tolkien, the tenor of critical publications has changed enough to indicate that it has entered a fourth phase. Two characteristics seem to mark this period: one is popularization of the poem, the other is the self-reflective interest of criticism in itself.

This does not imply that the old, familiar arguments were forgotten; however, when they did appear, they often wore a different guise. For example, the Christian or pagan influences controversy still flourished. Between 1960 and 1962 at least four articles on the subject appeared. Of the four, Goldsmith's article, "The Christian Theme of Beowulf,"[2] is of greatest interest as it is most indicative of the attitude of the sixties. She disputes the generally accepted idea of Beowulf as the poet's ideal and argues that the poet, a Christian, presents this pagan warrior only to demonstrate the Christian principle that one should not be interested in earthly glory but should look for a reward in Heaven. The chief interest in the articles lies in its challenge to long accepted ideas.

During the sixties, there would be an increasing tendency to lock horns with old ideas, seemingly only for the purpose of argument. The pleas of Lawrence for a reasoning together of minds is the voice of a less competitive, more communal age. Bloomfield's claim that the characters are pre-Mosaic and as such are governed by the "ealde riht"

[old law],[3] McNamee's argument that the poet saw Beowulf as a Christ-like savior figure[4] (an interesting opposition to Goldsmith's article which appeared the same year); Goldsmith's contention that the poet was familiar with the teachings of Augustine and Gregory;[5] even Benson's suggestion that the poem was a vehicle for conversion of the blood brother Germanic pagans[6]--each supports the argument that Christian influences exist in the poem (while disagreeing to the extent). Each, however, seems more interested in pursuing his own point of view than in reaching a harmonious, reasoned agreement with other, often venerable ideas.

Just as the Christian or non-Christian influences argument had become a question of how much Christian influence existed in the poem (critics now avoided the question whether the poet and the poem were essentially Christian or non-Christian); so too, the argument over aesthetic changed. With few exceptions, Magoun being the most notable one, those who supported the position that the poem in the form we have it is the work of one man and is an artistically unified entity had won their battle by the sixties. All recognized the influence of Magoun's application of the oral formulaic tradition to Old English,[7] and especially to Beowulf.

One of the strongest phenomena of Beowulf criticism during the fifties, when Magoun was publishing articles which were directly or indirectly connected with the criticism

was the attitudes of others toward his two views: multiple authors for the poem and the oral nature of the poem as opposed to the traditional view of it as a literary composition. There was, during the sixties, little open agreement with Magoun; there was also little direct disagreement with this testy master of scholarly polemics. The second group consisted of those few warriors able to joust with Magoun because of their own scholarly clout. An example of such is a 1967 article by Bonjour, "Jottings on Beowulf and the Aesthetic Approach."[8] In a testy but humorous attack, the venerable scholar speaks of the diametrical opposition of two schools of Beowulf criticism over its unity. He then proceeds to attack Magoun's argument favoring a multiple authorship of Beowulf. Bonjour argues that Magoun is wrong in saying that the stories of Beowulf simply belong to a common poetic corpus. Rather, he suggests, the early references are in poetic anticipation of the latter ones.

Most scholars concerned with the aesthetics of the poem chose a more circuitous approach to disagreement. They agree to the significance of the oral formulaic tradition as a source for the poet who composed Beowulf in written form. However, critics generally believe that the poem was composed in written form from sources in the oral tradition, that it was composed by a man versed in the oral tradition, that it was, in its written form, the work of one man. Unlike the criticism dealing with other questions,

critics supporting the aesthetic unity of the poem tried, during the sixties, to combine positions. Thus, Renoir in a 1962 article, "Point of View and Design for Terror,"[9] agrees that the poet (a single poet) was a master of his oral-formulaic trade; however, he had to make his audience visualize its action as fast as they heard the words that described it. In the example of the approach to Heorot by Grendel--called by Brodeur the design for terror--the poet, as Renoir points out in close textual analysis, uses visual imagery and point of view with consummate grace to instill terror in his audience.

Another excellent article which attempts a harmonizing of the unity thesis and the oral formulaic position appeared five years later. In "Grendel's Approach to Heorot: Syntax and Poetry,"[10] Greenfield asserts that the poet's manipulation of diction and syntax achieves subtle poetic effects in bringing Grendel, Beowulf and the warriors from a polarity of position, action, and attitude to confrontation in Grendel's vision of the band within the hall. Greenfield carefully mentions that this does not deny the existence of formulaic verse patterns; it simply demonstrates that the poet used more than conventional formulaic counters to construct this brilliant passage.

Criticism existed on either side of this happy compromise. Although the theory of multiple authorship received little support, the oral formulaic position did. For instance,

in "The Harp in Beowulf,"[11] John Nist argues that as a product of an oral tradition, Beowulf demands harp accompaniment to be properly read. He contends, therefore, that the metrical theories of Sievers, Pope, and all the less brisk men, are inadequate because they do not stress the needed use of the harp. Unhappily, but wisely, he does not suggest a more perfect system. Furthermore, he seemingly ignores the re-edition of Pope's book, which includes a section on the use of the harp. The spectrum of criticism is so wide, however, that no critic can be expected to read it all, especially not re-editions.

Those who during the sixties took positions farther to the side of the more traditional theory of unity in the poem, the pre-Magoun position, included those who, to attain a superficial treatment, ignored the developments in aesthetic criticism during the sixties. One, for example, was Rexroth who, in a short article in the Saturday Review,[12] reminds the reader of the Tolkien article, for the position taken is essentially the same, if less well written and less entertaining. Fry's introduction to his compilation in 1968[13] is also superficial, as introductions often are. In it, he agrees with Tolkien and praises the multiple point of view of the author.

Another aesthetic consideration of the sixties was the continuance of the hobby horse criticism of the fifties.

Some of it is good. Kaske's 1968 article,[14] for instance, reintroduces his favored theme that *sapientia* and *fortitudo* are the unifying themes of the poem. Here as in previous work, he argues that a balance of the two (and of their Germanic equivalents) can be traced through both parts and through the digressions, demonstrating how one should act with a balance of the two.

Kaske's good article suggests that school of aesthetic criticism which is popular with the unknown and incompetent as well as with those like Kaske; it is the practice of choosing a theme, or idea, or symbol, and often arbitrarily, trying to saddle the old war horse, *Beowulf*, with it. All too often the saddle only detracts from the saddled. This practice, using the poem as a vehicle for quick publication, is one of the major evils which developed in *Beowulf* criticism during the sixties. In the hands of a scholar familiar with the criticism, it may provide insight into the poem. Kaske is certainly an example of this. However, too often the critic who chooses the hobby horse is not sufficiently familiar with the critical trends to know whether his idea has been adequately discussed before, or whether the analogies he draws validly fit within the generally accepted frame of reference which has been slowly and laboriously constructed about *Beowulf* by scholars who spent much time in research and , often, little time in publication. The giants--Tolkien, Brodeur, Lawrence,

Chambers--when these men published, they had something to say because they published within a scholarly tradition they understood.

Bonjour recognized this problem in 1962, a problem created by the publish or perish syndrome characteristic of the late fifties and the sixties. In "Beowulf et le Démon de l'Analogie,"[15] he complains that sloppy criticism is rampant in Beowulf scholarship, the work of persons unfamiliar with the previous scholarship. He cites analogy as a major area for such sloppy work. Bonjour illustrates his opinions with specific attacks on D.W. Lee's "On Grendel's Arm"[16] and M.J. McNamee's "Beowulf: An Allegory of Salvation."[17] These two articles demonstrate ignorance of that which has occurred before in Beowulf criticism. They are examples of work done by persons who seem more interested in publishing, using Beowulf as a vehicle, than in contributing to an understanding of Beowulf.

Bonjour, in the volume in which this particular article appears, illustrates another phenomenon characteristic of the sixties, the compilation of criticism. Perhaps as much as anything else the increasing tendency to gather together selected criticism which stresses certain critical points of view marks this ten year period. Bonjour's book, Twelve "Beowulf" Papers 1940-1960,[18] which appeared in 1962 is among the earliest; it is certainly the most interesting, for it traces the development of a critic's

views of a poem over a twenty year period. Not satisfied with simply gathering together ten previously published Beowulf papers, Bonjour in a manner suggestive of Teilhardian involution comments upon each article with the Olympian perspective created by the passage of years. Furthermore, Bonjour comments upon comments upon the articles. He generally concludes in the course of this rather bizarre book that his original ideas were correct. Brodeur does receive credit for correcting him on the Unferth digression, but such praise is not readily in evidence elsewhere. This collection concludes with two new articles, one attacks sloppy criticism and the other sides with Brodeur in his opinion that oral formulaic criticism does not prove that the poem was written other than by one poet, a man who was a poet and not a hack balladeer.

Other compilations of the sixties include Nicholson's 1963 An Anthology of "Beowulf" Criticism[19] which seems, through choice of selections, to lend credence to the opinion that the poet was a Christian operating within a Christian context. Greenfield's Studies in Old English Literature in Honor of Arthur G. Brodeur[20] which appeared in the same year consisted in major part of articles on Beowulf. This edition shows more balance than Nicholson's; it has a choice of selections appropriate for an editor who is concerned with the importance of balance in Beowulf. Another compilation of criticism of note appeared in 1967. Edited by Robert Creed, Old English

Poetry[21] contained eight articles on Beowulf. Included were articles on metrics, pagan coloring, the aesthetic approach, the syntax and poetry, the problems of translation, and the role of the Frisians as a source. The book serves as an interesting introduction to the critical positions of the sixties and, incidentally, provides additional exposure for the work of by now familiar names of the fifties and early sixties. The following year, Fry published his compilation, The Beowulf Poet.[22] His introduction, "The Artistry of Beowulf,"[23] suggests the point of view which he chooses to emphasize in the text.

One other trend of the sixties was the popularization of the poem. That term bears ugly connotations and should. Popularization has usually meant an increase in the number of articles written by those who lack knowledge of the criticism which has preceded them. Articles such as Rexroth's "Classics Revisited--IV: Beowulf,"[24] and books such as Irving's A Reading of Beowulf[25] lose sight of the poem in attempts to make it popular. The latter, for example, suggests the rather vague analysis of nature criticism of the Nineteenth Century in its focus upon light and dark, heroic and evil.

The future seems to beckon with even more popularization of the poem. The publication in 1969 of Donald Fry's excellent "Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburh:" A Bibliography[26] now makes it possible for the scholar desirous to publish on the poem to seek those articles which deal with the

subject he wishes to exploit. Hopefully this may mean that popularization of Beowulf and Beowulf criticism will not result in superficiality; that some understanding of the critical tradition will be incorporated in the popularized readings, translations, and articles of the seventies. But a bibliography alone will not do this; it is too impersonal to attract those interested in the critical tradition, but not sufficiently interested to immerse themselves in it. What is needed is a critical history of the criticism which incorporates some of the bias, some of the missed emphasis, and some of the scholarly camaraderie, which comes from intimate contact with those books and articles which most effectively created the changing trends in Beowulf criticism.

CHAPTER IV

NOTES

[1] Essays on Questions Connected with the Old English Poem of "Beowulf," tr. and ed. J.R.C. Hall (Coventry, 1912).

[2] MAE, XXIX (1960), 81-101.

[3] "Patristics and Old English Literature: Notes on Some Poems," CL, XIV (1962), 36-43.

[4] "Beowulf: An Allegory of Salvation?" JEGP, LIX (April 1960), 190-207.

[5] "The Christian Perspective of Beowulf," in An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame, 1963), pp. 373-386.

[6] "The Pagan Coloring in Beowulf," In Old English Poetry, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, 1967), pp. 193-214.

[7] "The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum XXVIII (1953), 446-467.

[8] In Old English Poetry, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, 1967), pp. 179-190.

[9] Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, LXIII (1962), 154-167.

[10] In Old English Poetry, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, 1967), pp. 275-284.

[11] In Old English Poetry, ed. Robert P. Creed (Providence, 1967), pp. 27-46.

[12] "Classics Revisited-IV: Beowulf," Saturday Review (April 1965), p. 27.

[13] "The Artistry of Beowulf," In his The Beowulf Poet (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), pp. 1-7.

[14] "Sapientia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf," pp. 269-310.

[15] In his Twelve Beowulf Papers, 1940-1960 with Additional Comments (Neuchatel, 1962), pp. 173-191.

[16] Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 186.

[17] Bonjour, Twelve Beowulf Papers, p. 188.

[18] (Neuchatel, 1962).

[19] (Notre Dame, 1963).

[20] (Eugene, Oregon, 1963):

[21] (Providence, 1967).

[22] (Engelwood Cliffs, 1968).

[23] Fry, "The Artistry of Beowulf," pp. 1-7.

[24] Rexwroth, p. 27.

[25] (New Haven, 1969).

[26] (Charlottesville, Va., 1969).

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